हिंदू आचारकांडम्.

THE HINDU AT HOME

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SIVITE PRIEST WITH SACRED MARKS.

(*See page 78.*)

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THE HINDU AT HOME

BEING

SKETCHES OF HINDU DAILY LIFE

BY

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FORMERLY C. M. S. MISSIONARY, MASULIPATAM

SECOND EDITION

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"Ancestor-worship, in some form or other, is the beginning, the middle, and the end of what is known as the Hindu religion."

Professor Bhattacharja, in "Tagore Law Lecture."

PREFACE

TO THE SECOND EDITION

THE first edition met with such a favourable reception that, at the request of the Publishers, I have prepared a second one. The plan of the book is the same, but, in the light of friendly criticisms, I have revised and improved the whole. I have omitted a few passages. On the other hand, I have added an Appendix, showing the present attitude of the more intelligent Hindus towards social reform. I am indebted to the Honorary Secretary, S. P. C. K. Press, for a valuable index. A glossary of the Hindu terms used in the book has also been added.

J. E. P.

LONDON, *May* 1, 1908.

PREFACE

TO THE FIRST EDITION

THESE sketches originally appeared, with the exception of two or three chapters, in the "Madras Christian College Magazine." I am aware that there are standard works which contain a good deal of the information here given, but there are also many things now

described, which will, I trust, be found interesting. I have seen no mention of some of these in any books to which I have had access. The work represents the result of personal observations during a period of twenty-seven years spent in South India, when I was in daily intercourse with the people of the land.

The Sanskrit quotations have been given to me by learned pundits from whom I have received much help, especially in the translation of these statements. I have not attempted a free metrical translation into English verse; but have tried to give the original and the translations, as far as possible, in corresponding lines. Many of the quotations are not to be found in printed books, but are taken from the private palm-leaf manuscripts of purohitas (priests), which have been handed down from generation to generation. Thus, it was manifestly desirable to give the original text from these unusual sources of information.

The quotations from Manu are all made from the English translation by Sir William Jones. I used the Haughton edition of 1825.

J. E. P.

MASULIPATAM, *October* 25, 1895.

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CHAPTER I.

THE HINDU HOME.

गृहम्. (Gruham.)

"Let him not cease to perform day by day, according to the preceding rules the five great sacraments; and having taken a lawful consort, let him dwell in his house during the second period of his life." (Manu, v. 169.)

IN giving some account of matters connected with the daily home life of the Hindu, it may be well to introduce the subject by a description of the home itself. In this, as in everything else, the Hindu is guided by rules and regulations prescribed by his religion. There is nothing that has to do with the whole life of a Hindu, and every possible detail thereof, from his cradle to his grave, which is not regulated by such rules. Many of these directions were originally the outcome of circumstances bearing upon the welfare of the individual or community, but they have gradually become absorbed in the religious administration and, at length, appear as sections of a divine code that must be observed, on pain of severe physical and spiritual penalties.

I do not intend to say anything of the homes of the modern Europeanized Hindu; for, in the first place,

such are comparatively few in number, and are chiefly confined to the large towns and cities; and, on the other hand, they do not represent the ordinary habits and customs of the people. The orthodox Hindu looks with dislike upon the many departures from custom that are beginning to manifest themselves, particularly in the Presidency cities and other seats of light and learning.

The subject of Hindu homes is a very wide one, and may include many varieties, from the miserable hut of the lowest outcaste up to the lordly dwelling of the Máharájah. The extreme poverty of the very lowest classes, the complete absence of all ideas of comfort, and the simple requirements of a tropical climate, together serve to perpetuate the primitive character and the miserable squalor of the ordinary labourer's hut. A few jungle sticks and the leaves of any of the varieties of the palm, or a few bundles of grass or reeds, suffice to make a covering into which the poor man and his family can creep on cold nights, or during the heavy rains; but such a place can scarcely be called a home. Such people live mostly out of doors, both night and day. The hut is simply a shelter from inclement weather, and a place for the safe custody of their few pots and cooking utensils. There are infinite gradations from this primitive dwelling to the palaces of the great chiefs and kings; but, as far as I have been able to judge, after a long and varied experience, there is one thing in common about them all, and that is the absence of that comfort, that indescribable something which is the charm of an English home, and which causes us to use the word as a synonym for the eternal happiness beyond. This may be only insular prejudice and the association of ideas; for, after all, comfort and happiness are but comparative terms.

Before describing the house itself, I will mention some of the regulations connected with the building of

it—regulations as to its site and the materials to be used in its construction, and the time for commencing the work. All these things are minutely laid down in Hindu books of greater or less antiquity. The "Nirnayasindhu," (the ocean of ritual), is a kind of encyclopædia of all Hindu customs; and the "Kálámrutam" (the nectar of time), contains the sixteen rites or regulations concerning the sixteen chief events in a man's life, from his birth to his death. From these two books a smaller one has been compiled, called "Vástu Shástra," (the science of domestic architecture), which treats of all matters connected with buildings, especially private dwellings and, though many of the directions are not now generally complied with, most of those that are here described are still observed by the ordinary orthodox Hindu. There are regular professional persons called Vástu Shástris (doctors of building), generally of the goldsmith caste, whose business it is, for a consideration, to give all the correct measurements and directions, in due accordance with the ritual, to those about to erect new dwellings. I heard of a celebrated member of this profession and sent for him, as I wished to see his books and to make his acquaintance. At first he declined to come, as he feared Europeans. He thought he might be beaten or not well-treated, but, on being assured that he would meet with nothing but kindness, he consented to come. He was a most respectable looking old man and, being of the goldsmith caste, he wore the thread of the dvija, or twice born but, as he had not brought his books, I did not get much information from him. He promised to come again but failed to do so, the reason being that he was hastily summoned to a distant village on the south of the Kistna river. It appears that a certain man, who was building a new house, had fallen ill, and he sent in haste for this doctor—not a doctor for his body, but a doctor for the house! Something must have gone

wrong in the calculations, or something or other of the new building, and hence this blow from the offended deity concerned. Money was sent to defray the expenses of this celebrated Shástri, but he would not go until he was assured that his advice would be followed, even if it involved pulling down portions of the building already erected. How he fared in this expedition I have never heard; but it appears that sometime ago this same person was sent for to attend another case, the result of which brought him great fame. A certain house owner had recently entered a new house which he had built, but within a month he fell very ill. It was thought that something must be wrong with the building, and this house-doctor was sent for. Having considered the case, the doctor decided, by virtue of his science, that there was a snake in a certain beam of the building. The reptile had entered the hollow part of the beam which had been plugged up by the carpenter, and was there languishing, and hence the calamity. A snake charmer was summoned, the beam was sawn through and a reptile, which turned out to be a cobra, was drawn out by the snake charmer and placed in an earthen vessel. It was there fed with milk for some ten days until it revived and recovered its vigour, when it was taken away to a suitable place and set free. The patient recovered in proportion as the cobra's strength revived, and within a few days he was quite well. The wisdom and skill displayed by our friend in this case was much praised and he was suitably rewarded. These simple stories are here narrated for what they are worth. The people fully believe in them, and they serve to show the superstitious notions that are still entertained in connection with Hindu dwellings.

The first question that arises in connection with the building of a house is as to the site, and many directions are given as to the colour and taste and smell

of the soil, together with the various means of testing whether the spot or its neighbourhood is lucky or unlucky; but much of this is considered obsolete now. Builders are still, however, very particular as to the position of the house with reference to a temple, and also as to the presence of human bones in the soil. If, on digging for the foundations of a new dwelling, any bit of human bone should be turned up, the greatest care is taken to discover and remove every particle that can be found. Sometimes the site is altogether abandoned. This idea may have originated from sanitary considerations. If, again, the owner should fall ill, whilst the building is going on, and die before it is finished, the whole thing is completely abandoned, and no one would think of taking over the work with a view to completing it. A house must not be built in front of a Siva temple, as the eye of that god has an evil influence; nor must it be built behind one to Vishnu, but it may be built on either side of either one of them. I will here relate a peculiar case that came under my own observation sometime ago, as it has to do with the question of the site upon which a house may be built. I passed through a certain deserted village in which many of the houses were dismantled. It was a Sudra village of prosperous farmers. It was getting late in the forenoon and, as I had not yet breakfasted, this appeared to be a good opportunity to make a halt. The village munsiff (the village executive officer), who came up, gave me permission to pass the heat of the day in the sheltered courtyard of one of the houses that was still left standing. After breakfast, I began to explore and to seek for information. I was informed that, for certain religious reasons, the whole village had been abandoned and that the farmers had settled on a site, about half a mile distant from their old homes. They had partly pulled down their houses and utilized what they

could of the old materials for rebuilding. The reason given for this change was as follows. It appears that for some time there had been a great deal of sickness in the village and many deaths, so it was decided by the Brahmins that a curse rested upon the place. On looking round for the probable cause of this, from certain signs it was discovered, or pretended to have been discovered, that there must formerly have been a temple near the village tank and, as there was no vestige of the temple left, it was concluded that it must have been destroyed. For this or some other reason, the anger of the temple god had been aroused and he had cursed the village, hence the number of deaths. The consternation this decision would cause amongst these poor superstitious people can be easily imagined. They do not seem to have questioned the decision, but simply decided that it was the will of the god that they should remove. Accordingly, for a pecuniary consideration, the Brahmins pointed out a new site, and the simple folks began at once to remove their dwellings. At the time of my visit most of the houses had been completely dismantled, and nothing was left of them but the substantial mud walls which presented the appearance of a sad, but by no means picturesque ruin. A few of the old inhabitants, among whom were the barber and the potter, still lingered on, probably because they could not meet the expense of removing. The site upon which the old village was built was in every respect superior, from sanitary and other points of view, to the low and ill-drained place to which the removal had been made; but no logic of facts can overcome the superstitious fears of these simple people. Probably the real cause of the unhealthiness of the place might have been found in some of the back-yards or other surroundings. Dame Nature had been outraged by a systematic neglect of the attention due to her fair daughter Hygeia,

and punishment had resulted. Such simple matters as these, however, are beneath the ken of the Hindu wise-man, and everything must be decided in accordance with rules formulated by a dense superstition. As I sat there during the heat of the day in the shade of the old door way, I could not but reflect upon the scene before me. How many generations of industrious Hindu farmers had been reared in that place! Here were still the peepul tree (ficus religiosa) and the neem (azadirachta Indica), under whose shadow so many had sat in days gone by for a council or for gossip, now left standing alone amidst the miserable ruins of once loved homes. Whilst I was there, an old widow woman came up from the new village to the house thus temporarily occupied by me, and seemed by no means pleased at my presence. I courteously explained that I had received permission, and then it turned out that the house did not belong to my friend the munsiff at all, and hence perhaps his readiness to let me rest there. However I was not disturbed, and presently the old lady began to sweep up the deserted rooms. There seemed no need for it, as nobody came there and the house was only waiting to be pulled down. Perhaps her old affection for the place brought her there, and made her treat it as a sacred shrine that she could not bear to see neglected. I took the opportunity kindly to point out to my village friend the munsiff the folly of all this expense and trouble, this breaking up of comfortable homes, all for a superstitious idea. With true Indian politeness he appeared to agree with what I said, but he finished off with the old Hindu excuse, "What could we do? The Brahmins said it must be done and we were obliged to go." We sometimes hear people talk as though superstition were now dead in India; but except within a narrow circle, happily widening by slow degrees, composed of

those influenced by Western ideas, superstition has just as strong a hold upon the masses as ever. How can it be otherwise. If it took many many centuries to do away with old heathen superstitions in the West, some of which are not yet completely eradicated, it must not be supposed that one or two generations, or very many of them, indeed, will effect much change in the East where the growth is so dense and so deeply rooted.

After the site has been selected the position of the neighbouring dwellings must be next taken into consideration, as if, for instance, the water from a house flows towards a neighbour's there will arise evil and quarrels. Also in order to secure the general welfare, the water from one's own house should be made to flow in a certain direction—east, or north, or north-east. The timber used must be well considered, for certain kinds are sure to bring misfortune, if any one should be rash enough to use any of them. A list of unsuitable timbers is given in the books which deal with these matters. The well must not be dug on the south side of the house, or evil will be sure to follow; and if bones are found in excavating it, the fact will be taken as a portent of the death of the owner.

The next question is as to the time of the year at which building operations should be commenced. On this point most careful directions are given. In the list, given below, the first column gives the Indian name of the month, and the next the corresponding English time; while the third gives the consequences that are liable to ensue to the householder from commencing to build his dwelling at the particular time named :—

1.	Chaitram	March, April	Blessings generally.
2.	Vaishákham	April, May	Wealth.
3	Jyéshtham	May, June	Deaths.
4.	Áshadham	June, July	Evil to the cattle.
5.	Shrávanam	July, August	Increase of cattle.

6.	Bhádrapadam	August, September	Loss of sons.
7.	Aswayujam	September, October	Poverty.
8.	Kárteekam	October, November	Complete happiness.
9.	Márgasirám	November, December	Good crops.
10.	Pushyam	December, January	Danger of fire.
11.	Mágham	January, February	General success.
12.	Phálgunam	February, March	Much happiness.

The proper time for commencing the work having been decided upon, the difficulty as to the aspect has to be settled, and this can only be decided by the following consideration. A deity called Vástupurusha, said to preside over the science of building, migrates between the three worlds, swarga (heaven), marthya (this world), and pátála (hell). He is always in a reclining posture, but he changes it at different times of the year. For instance, during certain months of the year his head will be turned towards the north, and at other times towards other points of the compass. A house should not, when the building of it is commenced, face towards the feet of Vástupurusha or where his eyes may fall upon it, from which it follows that, if a certain aspect is desired, building operations must commence at a period of the year when either of the above contingencies may be avoided, owing to the position in which the deity may be then reclining.

Another thing to be considered will depend upon which side of the road or street the house site may be. According to the "Vástu Shástra," it is good to build towards the north or east, but bad towards the south or west. If, therefore, the house-builder should have a site large enough to enable him to comply with the Shástra he will not build his house right up to the road, if by so doing it would face towards the south or west. He will in that case build some distance back from the road or street and have only a blank wall with a door in it opening on to the road. In towns or crowded localities where the area of sites may be limited, this point may not always be complied with through lack

of space; but where it is feasible, and especially in country-places where space is not so valuable, this rule of the Shástra is generally attended to.

The aspect of the new house, and the proper time for the commencement of operations having been duly fixed upon, the next thing is to prepare for the excavations for the foundations, and the performing of a ceremony somewhat analogous to that of laying the foundation stone of a public building in Europe. A good time of the day having been fixed upon by astrology, the owner of the house, together with his wife who must be present, and the puróhita, or family priest, and perhaps others, assemble for the foundation-laying ceremony. After worshipping Ganesha, without propitiating whom nothing of importance can ever be undertaken, a piece of stick called shankhu, about a foot long, which has been cut into a certain prescribed shape by the carpenter, is planted in the north-east corner of the foundation of the main building. Into the place where this is planted, various kinds of grain and metals are thrown, together with flowers, leaves and coloured rice. The whole is then worshipped. This coloured rice (akshata) enters largely into all religious ceremonies. In fact no worship, other than that at funerals, or some way connected with the dead, can be performed without this use of coloured rice. The idea appears to be that the stick by this ceremony (pratishta) becomes animated with the spirit of the god Vástupurusha, who is thereafter the good genius of the house. The following is a specimen of the prayers addressed at this ceremony to this shankhu god:—

त्वदाधारं गृहस्थानं श्रीकरं देवनिर्मितं ।

त्वद्विना गृहनिर्माणं न कर्तव्यं शुभेच्छुभिः ।

प्रीतोऽस्मिन् स्थापितो नित्यं गृहसौख्यं विवर्धय ॥

"Thou art the stay of the dwelling;
Art by God appointed and givest prosperity.
Without thee the building of a dwelling
Should not be done by those who desire happiness.
Do thou, being established in this shanku,
The good of this house ever increase."

At the putting up of the main doorway, and again when the ridge-piece is put up, religious ceremonies are performed; it is so also at the digging of the well, and when the family first takes possession of the house. These ceremonies will now be described in order.

The principal entrance to the house or front door, is called simhadwáram, or the lion entrance. The woodwork of this is always more or less carved, sometimes most elaborately so. There are two pieces, laid across the top corners of the door frame, called the horse-stools, because the cross pieces which support the wall above are laid on them. These horse-stools are carved into a shape which represents lions, elephants, horses or parrots, according to the fancy of the owner. The putting up of this entrance door frame is a serious business, and necessitates a religious ceremony. The woodwork is smeared with saffron, and adorned with red powder (kunkuma) and flowers, and with a garland made of leaves of the mango tree. Kunkuma which is much used in worship and in all kinds of Hindu ceremonies, in which women are associated, is a red powder made of turmeric, alum, and lime juice. Worship is then actually performed to the wood by repeating certain prayers, and sprinkling it with sandal paste and coloured rice. The following are specimens of slokams or prayers on such occasions:—

1. द्वारशाखाः सुसंबद्धा वास्तुशास्त्रविधानतः ।
गृहेऽस्मिन् सुस्थिरा यूयं स्थित्वासौख्यं विवर्धत ॥

हरिद्राकुङ्कुमैः पुष्पैः चंदनैरभिपूजिताः ।
चिरकालं सुखं स्थित्वा अस्मान्पालयतानिशं ॥

"O door frame, with parts fitted tightly together
According to Vástu Shástra rule,
Do thou being fixed in this house,
Cause happiness to increase."

"With saffron, turmeric, flowers
And sandal being well adored,
Do thou for ever be happy
And be our support and stay."

The next religious ceremony takes place when the ridge-plate is put into position. This, too, is worshipped in much the same way as the door frame. Whilst lying upon the ground, across two pieces of timber, it is adorned with saffron, flowers, and garlands, and then worship is paid to it. After this it is put into position. The following is a specimen of the prayers used;—

गृहाधाराः पृष्ठशाखाः पूजिताः पुष्पचंदनैः ।
स्थापिता वास्तुशास्त्रोक्तम् सुखं कुरुत शाश्वतं ॥

"O ridge-plate, support of the house,
Having been adored with flowers and sandal,
And fixed according to Vástu rule,
Do thou cause continued prosperity."

As a well is a very necessary adjunct to a house, and a very important one from a Hindu point of view, there is a religious ceremony connected with the digging of it. Before the work is commenced, prayers are repeated to the earth, which is considered to be a goddess (bhúdevi), and also to Varuna, the god of all kinds of water. At the completion of the work, and before the water can be used, a dedicatory ceremony is performed. The mouth of the well is adorned with saffron and the coloured powder kunkuma. A patch of ground near the well is then prepared and purified

by smearing it with cow-dung and by adorning it with lines made of rice powder. Upon this patch of earth a lump of saffron is placed, which is supposed to represent Ganesha, under the name of Vinayaka or the remover of obstacles. Worship is then performed to this by the master of the house, instructed by the attendant family priest in the usual manner. A small lamp fed with ghee (clarified butter) is lighted, and incense is put upon some live coals of fire. While the lamp is burning and the incense rising up, flowers, sandal paste and coloured rice are dropped over the supposed god whose various names are repeated by the worshipper. Támbúlam is placed near the god, together with one or two coins (dakshina) which become the fee of the priest, and the worship is concluded by the waving of burning camphor and making obeisance with closed hands (námaskáram). Támbúlam is betel-leaf and areca nut made up into a small parcel, ready to put into the mouth. A little slaked lime is added before use. The masticating of this compound seems to be much enjoyed, but the red colour it imparts to the mouth and lips is far from pleasant from an European point of view. This little luxury, however, is partaken of at the termination of every meal, and no important transaction or any religious rite can be complete without it. The god Varuna is then worshipped in much the same manner. The támbúlam and the coins are placed in the hands of the priest, and the whole ceremony is concluded with the usual obeisance. During the dropping of flowers, sandal paste and coloured rice into the well, the priest, the householder following him according to his ability, repeats the following prayer:—

जलाधिराज वरुण कूपेऽस्मिन्सन्निधिं कुरु ।
त्वत्प्रसादान्महाभाग सुखिनस्स्याम सर्वदा ॥

"O Varuna, thou ruler of the waters,
In this well grant thy presence.
By thy favour O great being,
May we ever be prosperous."

I now proceed to give some general idea of the architecture and general arrangements of a Hindu dwelling. I describe an ordinary Hindu house as it is in the Circars, a district in the northern part of the Madras Presidency. The style of the building may differ very much in the widely distant parts of India, and amongst its different races and religions. As, however, some main principles pervade all Hindu domestic architecture, some general idea may be gathered from this description of a Hindu home. The chief feature in the building is that it must be in the form of a square, with an opening to the sky in the centre. The roof slopes outward and inward, and the inner sides all converge around a rectangular open space, larger or smaller as the case may be. In large well-built houses this central open space will form a regular courtyard, whilst in smaller buildings it will be so small that the vacant space where the roof converges, is only a few inches square, and the floor underneath it a mere depression in the earth large enough to catch the rainfall from the roof. In very large houses there may be two of these courts, but in all of them the principle is the same. The origin of this arrangement is not very clear, and different reasons are given for it. Some say it is in order that the sun's rays may shine into the house; or, as it was put to me by a Brahmin friend, just as it is necessary that there should be some gold, if even a speck, worn on the body, so it is necessary for some few rays, at least, of the sun to fall into the dwelling. Others say it is because it is necessary for the rain to fall into the house in order to secure its happiness. However this may be, this arrangement is a source of much

discomfort if not of positive evil. The heavy monsoon rain pouring in from the roof into the very centre of the living place makes everything very damp and uncomfortable. It is true there is a kind of drain made for the water to pass through under the walls to the outside, but the arrangement is certainly a source of some of the many forms of fever and other diseases to which Indians are so liable. Here again we see the effects of custom hardened into a religious law. Probably the origin of it was for protection in the former unsettled times from foes and wild animals. Now all dwellings erected in accordance with the Shástra must have this characteristic form.

Windows, as a rule, do not look out upon the street, and when there are any they are placed high up in the wall, out of all reach of passers by. On the public road nothing but a blank wall with a more or less imposing doorway is seen. This door is generally of a massive character, often studded with bosses of iron, and both it and the door posts are frequently ornamented with elaborate carving. It is very peculiar that this front door should always be of so massive a character, seeing that the back and side walls and other doors are relatively so much slighter and weaker. An Indian thief would never think of attempting to break through the front door of a dwelling. His efforts are directed to digging through the house or the compound wall, especially if it is made of mud; or to breaking in through the back-yard door, which lacks the strength of the front one. Probably the reason is that the spending of time and money on this imposing front entrance is simply in accord with the tendency of human nature ever to put the best on the outside. The front wall next the street is sometimes not the real wall of the house at all. Often, perhaps for reasons already alluded to in speaking of the site, or perhaps for the sake of space and security

or privacy, the front wall, with its elaborate doorway, is but the outer side of the yard or enclosure inside which the house itself is built. When this is the case, the ceremony already alluded to,[1] relative to putting up the chief door frame of a new house, is performed, not in connection with this entrance, but in connection with that of the dwelling proper.

In good houses the open space, into which visitors first enter, is paved with brick, or laid over with smooth polished plaster, or the earth is left just as it is. Around it is a verandah upon which the rooms of the dwelling open out. The four points of the compass are strictly considered in arranging the rooms. The kitchen should always be on the south side and should run the whole width of the building. This is the most sacred part of the whole house, and persons of a lower caste than the household are never allowed to enter it. This rule is observed, even in the case of the poorest and meanest dwelling, if it should be that of a high caste man. The kitchen is partly a cooking place, partly chapel, and partly dining room. I have seen the inside of many native houses, but I have never been allowed to cast even a glance into this sacred room. If a house has an upper storey, it is probably built over the front portion, never over the kitchen. But except in the Presidency cities and other large towns, houses have, as a rule, no upper storey at all. In an ordinary house, no part of the roof must be higher than that of the kitchen, for to thus throw that sacred chamber into the shade would be decidedly irregular. Where, however, there is an upper storey to any portion of the house, it must be higher than the kitchen. In this connection a case may be mentioned which illustrates this point. A well-to-do native gentleman of my acquaintance built a

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[1] *Ante*, p. 11.

nice terraced entrance-hall to his house, but the result was a room very low in relation to its size. The reason for this is that, whilst the owner wanted to make it higher, he was not allowed to do so by his caste fellows as it would then be higher than his kitchen, and he had to submit to rule.

The rooms opening out on to the inner verandah are the bedrooms, other private rooms, the store-room and any other necessary rooms and offices. All the arrangement of rooms is regularly fixed in the Shástra, and great blessings are promised where these rules are complied with, whilst misfortunes are implied if the rules are wantonly infringed. One portion of the verandah is apportioned off as a kind of office or study, in which writing work and the like is done, and this portion is sometimes divided from the rest by a low partition. The inner verandah is also sometimes occupied by a few pet calves, or, it may be, in poorer houses and where outside space is not available, some cows are stalled there for the night. It is an amusing sight, in passing through the streets of an evening, to see the droves of cattle coming home from the pasture. As they go along, every here and there, one or more of the cows or buffaloes will turn aside and go up the steps of a house, passing through the doorway which has been left open on purpose. The animal will proceed straight to its accustomed place in the compound, or yard, or to its well-known corner in the inner verandah. Truly here in this country we see exemplified many an eastern usage set forth in the imagery of the Bible; for instance: "The ox knoweth his owner and the ass his master's crib: but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider." (Isaiah, i. 3.)

If we look at the furniture of a house we are at once struck with its extreme simplicity. Taste and wealth are not manifested in grand furniture and costly hangings, or any other of the things that go to make up

a luxurious home in Europe. Good timber, well-made wooden ceilings, and elaborate carvings are here the things most admired. The roof is, most frequently, open to the tiles or thatch, and hence much discomfort must arise from the falling of dust or insects and the like; but where it can be procured simple matting or a wooden ceiling is put up. A wealthy man will have ceiled rooms, and the beams, posts and all other wood work will be most elaborately and, in some cases, very beautifully carved. These are the signs of wealth. The usual mud walls are here replaced by walls of brick and plaster—perhaps the marble-like polished plaster peculiar to the country. The flooring is of brick and polished plaster, and the rooms, verandah and courts are spacious and lofty, instead of the usual dark, dingy and miserably small apartments. The roof also is made of good well-wrought timber with tiles, and not of common jungle wood and thatch; but, in all cases, the general features of the whole are the same as regards the architecture and arrangements. The furniture of a Hindu house is very little indeed as regards quantity, and very primitive in its nature. In the houses of a few of the modern and more advanced, a few chairs and a table or two may be found; but, as a rule, even amongst the better classes, there is a complete absence of most of the domestic conveniences which the poorest Europeans consider indispensable. In the kitchen-dining-room there are no tables, chairs, knives, forks, spoons, plates or dishes; nor are there any of the numerous articles that compose the *batterie de cuisine* of a well-to-do European home. A few metal or earthenware pots and pans and a simple clay fire-place suffice for the culinary operations; whilst the dinner plate is formed from the large leaf of the lotus or plantain, or from a few smaller leaves cleverly stitched together. Nature herself supplies most of the other requisites.

One needs to live amongst such people to learn how very few, after all, are the real necessities of life, if we only rid ourselves of notions formed by habit and custom. In the office place, there may be a low kind of table which serves as a seat by day and a couch by night. A rug or two may be spread on the floor with a few cushions to lean against, whilst the walls may be adorned with a few pictures representing scenes in the life of Krishna. These pictures are gorgeous and grotesque native productions. They are painted on glass and can be bought in almost every fairly large bazaar. Occasionally a print or two may be seen, or a cutting from some English illustrated paper; but they appear very much out of keeping with the rest of the surroundings.

The bed-room furniture would not strike an English lady as having that air of snugness and comfort which is the charm of the European bed-chamber. It consists of a native cot, a box or cupboard for the safe custody of the more expensive cloths and jewels. On one side of the wall is a shelf and in the wall are a few niches for the native lamps. The lamp is usually a very primitive affair, being composed of a cotton wick lying in a saucer of oil. It is generally placed in some niche in the wall or on a simple wooden stand. A few native pictures on the walls represent scenes from the "Rámá-yana," or some other one of the Indian epics. A brass mug-shaped vessel serves for all the purposes of a wash-stand, and a few square inches of looking glass suffice for the finer touches of the toilet. The water from the brass vessel is poured from the left hand into the right, or is poured by an attendant. This applied to the face serves for ordinary ablutions. The complete bath, in the absence of a river or tank, or other means of immersion, is taken by pouring water over the person from the same brass vessel. This is the usual mode of performing the toilet for

both men and women. It is generally done in the back-yard or some such suitable place, as may be convenient. In the early morning, the ordinary citizen is often seen, brass pot in hand, performing his morning ablutions, seated on the edge of his front verandah and with his head hanging over the street gutter.

In nothing, perhaps, are the primitive habits of the Hindu more conspicuous than in his ordinary sleeping arrangements. There is no "going to bed," in the sense understood by the European. The climate is the chief reason for this. The men, especially, seem to lie down anywhere, in the inner verandah or along the narrow verandah seat that runs along the front wall next to the street. In the villages particularly, they seem to lie about just wherever fancy dictates. No place seems too hard, or, to our ideas, too uncomfortable. The long sheet-like cloth is unwound from the body, or some sheet or blanket which is kept for the purpose is used; and with this the person is covered, head and all. There is no doubt that this custom of lying down to sleep anywhere and everywhere must be the reverse of healthy, and probably it is the cause of much of the rheumatism and kindred affections of the muscles and joints which are more or less prevalent. The richer classes, the aged and generally the master of the house, use a low light cot for sleeping upon, but it seems to be shifted about from place to place to suit convenience. In the hot weather it will be put where there is some cool air, whilst in the cold or wet season it will stand in the bed-room which is perhaps shared by the master of the house and some of his bigger sons. The wife occupies her own room together with the younger children. This seems to be the usual arrangement in Hindu households, especially when the married couple are verging on towards middle life.

When a son of the family marries, he does not take his bride and set up house for himself, but a

room in the paternal dwelling is set apart for his use, or an annex is built to accommodate the young couple, and they join the family as a part of it. It is easy to see how little difficulty there is in providing for visitors, as there is no anxiety as to which suite of apartments must be set aside for this or that particular party. There is always plenty of room for the men to lie down for their siesta during the heat of the day, or for their sleep at night, and the females simply lie down with those of the household.

The Hindu does not usually attempt much by way of a flower garden, nor is there generally much attention paid to the surroundings of a house to give it that pretty appearance which tend so much, in our eyes, to make a place look homelike and happy. If there is a plot of ground around the house, it may be that a few pumpkin plants straggle here and there, and a few egg plants, or a clump of plantain trees are grown; but everything has an unkempt appearance as though order and prettiness were unknown quantities in the Hindu mind. If the house is a large one, an orchard may be attached to it, containing some of the principal Indian fruit trees, such as the mango, jack, cocoanut, betel, custard-apple, or wood-apple; but here again the same slovenliness is painfully conspicuous, though so much might be made of such surroundings. Flowers are grown to a certain extent, such as the marigold and oleander and jasmine to be used in worship, or to be worn in the hair by the females for personal adornment. A plant of the tulasi or sacred basil, always occupies the place of honour in the masonry urn, which is placed somewhere in the inner court or in the yard at the back of the house.

Having described the most conspicuous architectural features of the ordinary Hindu dwelling and also its general arrangements and surroundings, I shall now

proceed to state the considerations necessary, from a religious point of view, before the householder can venture to occupy the house which he is supposed to have built. The first thing that has to be considered is the proper time of year for taking up residence in the new abode. On this point there is a little difference of opinion amongst Hindu authorities. According to some persons, if a house is newly occupied in Vaishákham, the owner will be blessed with many sons; if in Jyéshtam, he will have abundance of joyous festivities, such as marriages and the like; if the house is newly occupied in Phálgunam, the owner will be blessed with wealth; if in Mágham he will have good crops and much happiness. On the other hand, there are those who maintain that, although all the other months in the vernal equinox (Uttaráyanam) during which the sun is north of the equator, are good for newly entering into a house, Mágham is not a propitious month. This difference of opinion is chiefly between the Tamils, who reckon by the solar system, and the Telugus, who go according to the lunar. All, however, are agreed that it is most unpropitious to enter a new abode for the first time during any month of the second half of the year.

A suitable day for entering having been duly fixed upon, the house is adorned in various ways, chiefly by smearing saffron and kunkuma on the lintels and door posts of all the doors in the house, and tying over them a garland of flowers and leaves of the mango or of the nérédu tree (eugenia jambos). A company assembles consisting of the members of the family, relatives, friends and a number of Brahmin pundits. A band of native musicians and a group of dancing girls may also be in attendance, all of course in proportion to the means of the householder. A procession is formed from the house then inhabited by the owner to his new abode. As the company passes along, the

band plays and every now and then the company will stop before the house of a friend or that of some great person, when the dancing women will go through their performance of dancing and singing to the sound of a kind of harp and cymbals, and to the gentle beating of the tom-tom. The thing is so arranged that the procession arrives at the house at the propitious moment, before fixed upon, when they all enter, walking over grain that has been spread in the door way and all along to the western side of the central portion of the house. Worship is then performed to Ganésha, Vástupurusha, Venkatéshvara and other gods, after which the family priest makes the following declaration in the name of the house-owner, concluding with a prayer.

The declaration is :—

सुदिने शुभनक्षत्रे शुभलग्ने शुभांशके ।
नूतने स्वगृहे रम्ये पुष्पपल्लवराजिते ॥

प्रविशेद्बंधुभिश्चैव ब्राह्मणैः परिवारितः ।
विघ्नेशं सर्वदेवांश्च स्वस्तिवाचनपूर्वकं ॥

"On an auspicious day, under a lucky star,
At a fortunate moment of time,
(He must enter) his new and beautiful home,
(It being) decorated with flowers and tender leaves.

He must enter accompanied by relatives,
Brahmins and others,
(And worship) Vignéshvara and all other gods,
With hymns of praise."

The prayer is :—

देवदेव महादेव प्रसीद परमेश्वर ।
रक्षरक्ष जगन्नाथ सर्वानस्मान्निरंतरं ।
गृहसौख्यं कुटुम्बस्य ममवर्धय साम्प्रतं ॥

"O God of gods! O great God!
Be gracious unto us, O supreme God!
Preserve us, O preserve us, Lord of the universe!
Yea evermore preserve us!
Home happiness and domestic joys,
Do thou ever increase unto us."

After this is over, presents of cloths and jewels, according to the ability of the house-owner, are given to the chief workmen who have been engaged in the erection of the building. It is now quite a custom in India for chief workmen to be thus rewarded, and even some Europeans follow the ideas of the country, so far as to give a jewel or two to the chief workmen after any important building work is finished. The ceremonies of the day are concluded with a blessing after the following manner. A metal dish with coloured rice is produced, and some of the attendant Brahmins take a handful of this, and having repeated mantrams, cast the rice into the cloth of the house-owner who holds up a corner of it for the purpose. This blessing consisting of quotations from the Vedas is a very long one. The concluding portion only is here given. The translation, in this case, is a rather free one.

शतमानं भवति । शतायुः पुरुषः । शतेन्द्रिय । आयुष्ये-वेन्द्रिये । प्रतितिष्ठति ॥

"May thy life continue for a hundred years, and may thy mental and physical powers remain perfect for a hundred years."

The family priest then takes the rice, by handfuls, and pours it on the heads of the house-owner, his wife, his children and any relatives who may be present. On the following day there is a feast in the new house and, if the guests are numerous, an awning may be put up in the yard to accommodate them. When the owner is not a Brahmin, his Brahmin guests will receive their portion of the feast in an uncooked form, and

this they will take away with them to cook in their own houses. On an occasion of this kind, all castes, even Brahmins, will give food to all sorts of people, but the principal guests are relatives and friends. With this feasting the 'house-warming' is concluded.

There are various things that cause a house to become defiled. Some of these are only trifling, such as bees settling in the house, or an owl, or a certain kind of kite settling upon it or flying into it, or any fungus growing anywhere inside. These necessitate a minor kind of purification. The great defilement is caused by death. If any other than one of the chief members of the family is at the point of death, his relatives carry him out of the house into the outer verandah, or some such place. The reason for this may be seen from the following idea. There are twenty-seven lunar mansions (nakshatram), of which fourteen are disastrous and thirteen auspicious. Should a person die inside the house during any one of the fourteen inauspicious periods, the house must be abandoned by the whole family and left vacant for two, three, or six months, according to the particular star then in the ascendant. If, however, the death takes place outside the house, in the outer verandah for instance, only that portion must be divided off and abandoned for the set period. If the death takes place during any of the auspicious periods, the house only has the ordinary contamination of the family and is, with them, purified on the eleventh day after the death. It will be thus seen that it is a very risky thing for anyone to die inside a house, as the good or bad periods are only known to those learned in such matters (jyótishka) and, although in the case of the heads of the household the risk is usually run, sometimes the dying patient will ask to be taken outside to avoid possible trouble to the family.

After any defilement the house is purified in the following manner, portions of the ceremony or the whole being performed according to its relative importance. The most important purification is when, after temporary abandonment, the family again comes into residence. The house is thoroughly cleaned up and probably whitewashed. The family assemble, with their family priest and several other Brahmins or friends. Ganésha, under the name of Vighnésha, is worshipped. Water is poured into a vessel (kalasam), which is adorned with flowers, sandal, and the like, and this having been worshipped and all the gods having been invoked, the water is sprinkled by the priest over the various parts of the house and over the people present. Food is then cooked and partaken of by the company. The following are specimens of the slókas or verses repeated by the priest in the worship of the kalasam; they are a declaration and a prayer.

The declaration is:—

पुण्याहवाचनं कर्म पवित्रं पापनाशनम् ।
गृहदेहादि शुध्यर्थम् आत्मशुध्यर्थ मेवच ॥

गंगादिपुण्यतीर्थानि देवान् सर्वानृषीन् पितॄन् ।
आवाह्य कलशाग्रेषु वेदान् यज्ञान् विशोधकान् ॥

गंधपुष्पाक्षतैरेवं अलंकृत्य प्रपूज्य च ।
प्रार्थयेत्परमात्मानं सर्वाभीष्टफलाप्तये ॥

This punyáhavácharam rite
Is holy and destroys sin.
It is for the purification of a house, the body and other things,
And also for that of the mind.

The Ganges with all other holy rivers,
And all the gods, rishis, and ancients,
Also the Vedas and sacrifices,
Having been invoked into these vessels (now before us),

Which having adorned and worshipped
With sandal, flowers and coloured rice,
He (the householder) must pray to the supreme God
That all his desires may be fulfilled.

The prayer is :—

पापोऽहं पापकर्माहं पापात्मा पापसंभवः ।
त्राहि मां कृपया देव शरणागतवत्सल ॥

मत्समः पातको नास्ति त्वत्समो नास्ति मोचकः ।
पापिनं मां सदा ज्ञात्वा यथेच्छसि तथा कुरु ॥

I am a sinner; all my deeds are sinful.
I am of a sinful mind; I am born in sin.
O God in mercy save me!
Thou who art merciful to those who flee to thee.

There is no sinner equal to me:
There is no deliverer like unto thee.
Ever knowing me to be a sinner,
As is thy pleasure, so do.

A purification ceremony is gone through if the well becomes ceremonially contaminated. I know of a case in which a well of good water became impure through a non-caste servant of a European, who had access to it, having ventured to draw water from the well himself instead of getting some caste man to draw it for him. Some stir was caused by this, and the European master was petitioned to pay the expenses of the purification rendered necessary by the act of his servant. To this demand he gave a firm refusal, his right to the use of the well not being disputed. It ended by the abandonment of the well, as far as all caste people were concerned, and it was left for the use of the non-castes only and for Europeans.

There are various other occasions calling for purification. A robber might break into a house and go into the kitchen, and as he would probably be a low caste man, the full purification ceremony would be

necessary. If a dog or any other unclean animal were to die in or near the house, the place must be purified by sprinkling water mixed with cow dung, or with cow's urine. This is a minor purification which is often resorted to for lesser defilements. Enough, however, has been said to give a general idea of defilements and purifications connected with the Hindu Home.

The description given has been of the material home itself, rather than of the home life of the people. Doubtless home life, true domestic happiness, is much influenced by the immediate surroundings; but, after all, habit and custom are much if not everything in such matters, and certainly many an Indian home is happy in spite of what may seem to us its dulness and monotony. The old English proverb which says that "Home is home be it ever so homely" expresses a truth that can be applied in many ways; it is the hearts that make the home. What must be deplored, however, is the hard bondage to superstition that is so evident in every page of this description. It is a thraldom, emancipation from which seems remote and, viewed by itself, well nigh hopeless. It is but a mere truism to say that real progress in a nation cannot be said to have begun until it affects the home life. As regards India, it is the home that seems the last place to be affected by progress and enlightenment. Superstitions and kindred evils that would seem to be effete, if considered in the light of the platform and the press, are seen in the home life to be as deeply rooted and as powerfully binding as ever.

CHAPTER II.

THE HINDU DAILY ROUND.

नित्यकर्म. (Nityakarma.)

"Eager desire to act has its root in expectation of some advantage, and with such expectation are sacrifices performed; the rules of religious austerity and abstinence from sins are all known to arise from hope of remuneration. Not a single act here below appears ever to be done by a man free from self-love; whatever he performs, it is wrought from his desire of reward." (Manu, ii. 3, 4.)

THIS quotation from the ancient law-giver might serve well as a text upon which to found a homily, showing the distinctive principle that underlies all Hindu religion, and comparing it with that of the religion of Christ. All Hindu religious observances and good works proceed from a desire to propitiate a malevolent power and thus ward off evil; or from an equally low and selfish motive to obtain personal advantage, some worldly good, or to lay up a store of personal merit which will shorten the weary round of transmigration, and enable the person to more rapidly attain the goal of his aspirations, namely, absorption into the divine essence. It is true, the great sage does, in a verse following the one quoted above, say that should any one persist in discharging his duties without any view to their fruits, he would attain hereafter the state of the immortals; but he says this with what sounds like a saddened tone, and as though it were a foregone

conclusion that such disinterested motives could never be found.

I am now dealing especially with the daily life of a Brahmin. Other castes and non-castes are less particular in their religious observances, in proportion as they descend in the social scale; but all are more or less careful in their performance of some parts of the Hindu ritual, and from a description of the life of the highest a fair idea can be gathered of the whole.

Theoretically the life of a Brahmin is divided into four stages. The first, that of being a Brahmachári or unmarried student, is entered upon when he undergoes the ceremony of upanayanam or institution into the state of the twice-born.[1] Up to that time he has not been a Brahmin at all. The next stage is that of being a Gruhastha or married householder; the third that of a Vánaprastha or anchorite; the fourth that of a Sanyási or hermit. The daily course of life laid down for each of these stages is widely different, but without going into that of the other three, I shall attempt to give as clear an idea as I can of the various rites and ceremonies to be gone through every day by the strict Hindu during the second period, that of the ordinary married man. It is not to be supposed that every Brahmin in these days goes through the whole of the prescribed ritual; but there are some ceremonial observances that must be gone through by all. Those who are anxious for the merit and good name of being strictly religious do actually go through the daily course of life here described.

The pious Brahmin rises before daybreak or, if he would act strictly according to Dharma Shástra rule, two hours before the sun rises. Dharma Shástra is a written code minutely regulating the daily life of a good Hindu. His first thoughts, on awaking from slumber,

[1] This will be fully described in Chapter iv.

are directed to the deity whom he particularly worships. He will sit quietly for some time in silent contemplation, occasionally repeating a verse or two in praise of Krishna, Rama, or Siva, as the case may be, and perhaps a prayer for divine help. He does not repeat these verses from the Vedas, as he has not yet bathed, and no words from those sacred writings must be taken within lips whilst thus unpurified. They are from the Purânas or sacred books which occupy a lower position than the Vedas. The following are specimens and it will be seen that the first two of the three quoted are addressed to Krishna and Rama respectively, whilst the third is in praise of Siva. Vaishnavas, or worshippers of Vishnu and his various incarnations, would use the first two, but they would not use the third. Smârthas would use either or all of the three, as, whilst they chiefly worship Siva, they are at liberty to adore any other god of the Hindu pantheon.

बालाय नीलवपुषे नवकिंकिणीक जालाभिरामजघनाय दिगम्बराय ।
शार्दूलदिव्यनखभूषणभूषिताय नन्दात्मजाय नवनीतमुषे नमस्ते ॥

"O thou infant, thou dark blue bodied one with tinkling bells
In rows upon thy loins; thou naked one,
Adorned with jewels set with tiger's claws,
Thou son of Nanda, thou stealer of butter, I adore thee."

आपदामपहर्तारं दातारं सर्वसंपदां ।
लोकाभिरामं श्रीरामं भूयोभूयो नमाम्यहं ॥

"O thou deliverer from all evil,
Thou giver of all good things,
O Rama, thou admired of the whole world,
Again and again I adore thee."

चूडामणीकृतविधुर्वलयीकृतवासुकिः ।
भवोभवतु भव्याय लीलाताण्डवपण्डितः ॥

"May he whose head is adorned with the moon,
Who wears as an ornament the serpent Vasukihi;
May Siva be propitious:
He who is expert in dancing."

After this divine contemplation, he will proceed for a short walk to some secluded place outside the town or village and upon his return, before entering the house, he will carefully wash his feet and legs and rinse out his mouth many times with water. All this is necessary before he can touch any thing or even speak to any one. The next operation is to clean the teeth. This is always a very important item of the toilet, and, if any one may judge by the evident air of satisfaction with which it is done, it must be a very enjoyable one. The Hindu does not use a brush for this purpose, as he never can again put into his mouth that which has once been so used. He looks with abhorrence upon the European way of again putting into the mouth that which has over and over again been defiled by contact with the saliva. He always uses a bit of green twig or the root of some plant, and when once a piece is used it is thrown away. A favourite twig for this purpose is a green bit of the margosa tree (melia azadirachta), or the root of a plant called apamargam or uttaráni (achyranthes aspera), preference being given to that which is bitter and astringent. If a suitable twig cannot be found, the finger is used with powdered charcoal or ashes by way of tooth powder. Women are not allowed to use the twig or root for this part of their ablutions. They only use the finger.

Our friend next proceeds to perform his morning ablutions and his worship. If there is a river near, he will proceed thither, or failing that to a tank. If there is neither river nor tank, he goes to some well, probably the well in his own garden or yard. He then takes his bath. If he does so in the river or tank,

he goes in until the water reaches his breast or neck; if at the well, he pours the water over himself. Should he, through ill-health or old age, be unable to actually bathe in the cold morning in the air, he will rub himself over with a wet cloth. Before this operation, he repeats an invocation to the sacred rivers in the following prayer:—

> "Oh Ganges! oh Jamna!
> Oh Godavery! oh Sarasvati!
> Oh Narmadé! oh Indus! oh Cavery!
> Be ye present in this water."

If the bathing is in a tank or river, after repeating this invocation, he dips right under three times; if it is at a well, he pours water over himself shouting out, "Hari"—one of the names of Vishnu, or "Hara"—one of the names of Siva, according as he is a Vaishnava or a Säiva. Still standing in the water or by the well, he turns to the rising sun and pours out to it three oblations of water, repeating the gáyatri prayer each time.

The bathing over, the next thing is to repeat the morning prayer (sandhyávandanam) which is done, sometimes near the tank or river and sometimes after reaching home. When he does it at home, he will take some water in a vessel from the place where he has bathed. Before, however, the prayers can be said, the pundrams, or marks must be daubed on.[1] If the prayers are said at the water, the worshipper will simply make the marks on his forehead with water, or with earth from the river bed. The morning prayer commences by the repeating of some mantrams to drive away evil spirits from the spot. The worshipper takes three sips of water, repeating the names Keshava, Nárâyana, Mádhava, which are applied either to Vishnu or Siva, according to his sect. This sipping of water

[1] See chapter v. on the Sacred Marks.

is called achamanam and it is done before every religious ceremony and immediately after meals. The next thing is the mentioning of the time and place. Three oblations are again made to the sun, during which the gáyatri prayer is again repeated three times. Three more sips of water are taken, when, taking hold of his sacred thread, the worshipper again repeats the gáyatri at least ten times—marking off the times on the fingers or on the joints of the fingers. After this with clasped hands, he addresses a special prayer to the sun, commencing as follows:—

मित्रस्य चर्षणी धृत: श्रवो देवस्य सानसिं, सत्यं चित्रश्र वस्तमं.

"The renown of the good Surya (the sun), who is the supporter of mankind and who is worthy to be adored. It is imperishable and it gives health and prosperity to those who hear and honour it."

This done, the worshipper turns to the four quarters of the compass in the order of east, south, west and north, repeating at each quarter a prayer. In all ceremonies and processions of every kind, the turning must always be to the right, and never to the left; hence the order, east, south, &c. The prayer is as follows:—

ओं नम: प्राच्यै दिशे याश्चदेवता एतस्यां प्रतिवसन्ति एताभ्यश्च नमोनम: ॥

"Om. I bow to the east (or other quarter, as the case may be); whatever gods are in this quarter I adore."

The prayers conclude by the worshipper mentioning his own name, tribe, and family (pravara). If he should be the head of the household, he then proceeds to pour out oblations to the manes of his ancestors, three each to his father, grandfather and great-grandfather, mentioning their names and preceding the

whole by sankalpam and pravara. This ceremony is called pitrutarpanam.

The gáyatri prayer enters so largely into the daily ritual, that it may be well to describe, at more length, its great importance. This prayer, as indeed is the case with most mantrams, is always preceded by repeating the mystical monosyllable O M, or A U M, as it should be written. This triliteral syllable typifies the Trimurti or Hindu Trinity, Brahma, Vishnu and Mahéshvara or Siva. The sacredness in which this word is held may be judged of from the following quotations:—

"Brahma milked out, as it were the three Vedas, the letter A, the letter U, and the letter M, which form by their coalition the triliteral monosyllable, together with three mysterious words, bhur, bhuvah, sever, or earth, sky, heaven.

All rites ordained in the Veda, oblations to fire, and solemn sacrifices pass away; but that which passes not away is declared to be the syllable Om, thence called Achshara: since it is a symbol of God the Lord of created beings." (Manu, ii. 76, 85).

The gáyatri is the most sacred of all Hindu prayers and it must be repeated at least thirty times every day; that is, ten each for morning, noon and evening prayers, being preceded each time by the sacred word O M, and the words bhur, buvaha, swaha. Great advantage is supposed to accrue in proportion to the number of times this prayer is repeated, and many are the injunctions laid down with reference to it. Its origin is thus described by Manu:—

"From the three Vedas, also, the Lord of creatures, incomprehensibly exalted, successively milked out the three measures of that ineffable text, beginning with the word tad, and entitled sávitri or gáyatri." (ii. 7. 7).

Instructions for its repetition morning and evening and the benefits obtained thereby are thus particularized.

"At the morning twilight let him stand repeating the gáyatri until he see the sun; and at evening twilight let him repeat it sitting, until the stars distinctly appear. (Manu, ii. 101).

By continued repetition of the gáyatri at the twilights, the holy sages acquire length of days, perfect knowledge, reputation during life, fame after death and celestial glory." (Manu, iv. 94).

One more quotation may be given to show the great benefits suppose to be conferred by the use of this prayer, which will serve to account for its constant use in the daily ritual.

"For, as the dross and impurities of metallic ores are consumed by fire, thus are the sinful acts of the human organs consumed by suppressions of the breath, whilst the mystic words and the measures of the gáyatri are revolved in the mind." (Manu, vi. 71).

So sacred is this mantram held by Hindus, that a pious Brahmin would close his ears with horror if he heard it uttered by impure lips. It is one of the most ancient of all Aryan prayers and its interest is increased when we consider that even now, after being in use for centuries before the Christian era, it still daily rises up to heaven as the aspiration of untold multitudes of pious Hindus. I give a transliteration as well as a translation of it:—

ओं भूर्भुवः सुवः ओं तत्सवितुर्वरेण्यं ।
भर्गो देवस्य धीमहि धियो यो नः प्रचोदयात् ॥

Om, bhur buvah suvah
Om, tat savitur varényam
Bargó dévasya dhímahi
Dhiyó yónah prachódayát.

The first line is an introduction to the prayer proper, being an invocation to the gods dwelling in the three worlds, earth, sky, heaven. The prayer is again introduced by the sacred word Om which, I am assured by a Pandit friend, is the true form now in use. The translation is as follows:—

Om, earth, sky, heaven!
Om, that excellent vivifier,
The light divine, let us meditate upon.
Which (light) enlightens our understanding.

That is, "Let us meditate upon that excellent vivifier, the light divine, which enlightens our understanding."

Many who are careless will not perform morning prayers; they will say them together with those for midday, or perhaps not at all. Any one, however, who wishes to be respected as a good Hindu, will not fail to perform them in the way we have described. Be this as it may, the midday ceremonies, before food, cannot be omitted by any one on pain of liability to excommunication.

It must be borne in mind that no food of any kind can be taken by the Brahmin before the noontide bath and ceremonies are over. If occasion should necessitate his setting out for business before midday, things in the household would be hastened to suit circumstances.

The first proceeding in these, as in every other ceremony, is a bath. On going indoors, from the bath, the wet cloth is laid aside, and a pure[1] cloth is wound round the waist. The cloth thus used is one generally kept for the purpose, and, even if it has come home clean from the washerman, it must be at least rinsed out by the person himself or some one of his family. Sometimes a silk cloth is used, as that is supposed to be less liable to pollution than cotton, and this distinction is also conferred upon linen cloths. After putting on the pure waist cloth, the next thing is to put on the pundrams or sacred marks, after which the noontide prayers are said. These prayers are exactly the same as those already described for the morning, except that the special prayer to the sun is a different one. This one commences thus:—

आसत्येन रजसा वर्तमानो निवेशयन्नमृतं मर्त्यं च ॥ हिरण्ययेन सविता रथेना देवो याति भुवना विपश्यन् ॥

[1] When the word pure is used in this connection it means ceremonially pure.

"The circling sun, which has a luminous disc that shines everywhere with a true light, and which revives both men and the immortals, is coming on his golden car viewing the world."

The oblations to the manes of ancestors are also repeated, as in the morning, after which comes the daily worship of the household gods. This, in the case of Lingaits, is worshipping the lingam, which is done by all males and females; but, in the case of the worshippers of Vishnu, it is only performed by the head of the household. Should, however, the head of the house be unable, through pressure of business, or from any other cause, to go through this part of the daily observances, he will appoint some other of the household or the puróhita to do it for him by proxy.

This dévatárchana, or worship of the gods, is performed in what may be called the kitchen. The kitchen of a Brahmin house is a very sacred place. It answers in some respects to a private chapel. This room is separated by a low partition into two parts. The smaller one is for the fire-places and cooking operations, and it also serves as a pantry for the pickles and curry-stuffs, all of which must be kept free from ceremonial contamination. The larger half of the kitchen serves for the dining room. In an alcove, the household gods and the various instruments used in their worship are kept. Amongst the followers of Vishnu, the one who officiates at this daily worship of the gods proceeds to the kitchen and takes the images from their receptacle, usually a small basket of wicker work covered with antelope skin. Amongst Sri Vishnavas the images are only those that represent Vishnu; the Smártas, however, as they reverence both Vishnu and Siva, have in addition to these a lingam. The Madvas have, as their additional figure, an image of Hanuman the monkey god. The worshipper then proceeds to bathe the images and rub them with sandalwood paste. He also puts on them

the pundrams, after which he places them on a low stool. Small lights fed with ghee are then lit before them, and as an act of worship the leaves of the tulasi plant and certain kinds of flowers, are sprinkled over them. This is followed by the waving before them of a small piece of burning camphor, and the sounding of a small bell or gong. Whilst this is going on a mantram is said, the first few words of which are as follows:—

सहस्रशीर्षा पुरुषः सहस्राक्षः सहस्रपात् ।
स भूमिं विश्वतो वृत्वा अत्यतिष्ठद्दशांगुलं ॥

"The great supreme has countless heads,
Countless eyes and feet.
He encircles the whole earth,
He is larger than the earth by ten inches."

After this worship is over, there is nivédanam or offering of the food to the gods. The food about to be consumed is placed near the idols. It consists of rice, dholl and such like things and water. All are sanctified by being offered to the gods. The person who officiates waves his hands over these things towards the images, repeating the following mantram, which is merely a repetition of the names of the five vital airs of which life is supposed to consist, requesting that the food partaken of may benefit each respectively:—

"Om, may this become food for prána.
Om, may this become food for apána.
Om, may this become food for vyána.
Om, may this become food for udána.
Om, may this become food for samána.

After several minor ceremonies, the whole is concluded by the person who officiates taking three sips of the water in which the images have been bathed, and giving the rest of it to be drunk by the family present.

I have already said that this part of the daily ceremonies is different with the Lingaits. With them, each individual takes his lingam, and, holding it in his left hand, bathes it and worships it in very much the same manner as has been already described. The food is offered in the same way, except that this is done after it is served out to each person, when each one waves his right hand from his own mess towards the lingam which is in his left. The chief difference in the ceremony is that the mantram repeated is different from the one quoted above as used by the followers of Vishnu. Instead of the mantram commencing, "The great supreme has countless heads," the Lingaits repeat one commencing as follows:—

नमो हिरण्यबाहवे सेनान्ये दिशां च पतये नमो नमः ॥

"I adore thee (Siva) whose arms are wisdom and who art commander of the hosts; thou who art the lord of the ends of the earth I adore thee."

After all this ceremony is over and the doors have been securely barred to prevent any interruptions or impure intrusions, the family sit down to partake of food. This precaution is necessary as, if any one were for any cause to get up from his food, he could not sit down to it again, and if any impure thing, a dog for instance, were to stroll in whilst the meal was going on, or if any lower caste person were to go near them whilst thus engaged (an event difficult to imagine), the whole meal would have to be at once abandoned. The order of sitting at meals is this: all sit upon low stools or upon the ground, the place of honour being the right end of the line, the rest sitting in a row towards the left in order of age, the little boys and girls sitting somewhat apart. The females do not sit down to eat with the males, but it is customary for the little girls together with the little boys to join the family group. After the food

has been duly served out by the females and each one has his mess before him on his leaf, there is another ceremony which each must perform before he can proceed to eat. By each must not be understood the little boys who have not received the upanayanam, or the little girls. Each one has his drinking vessel on his left hand and he pours from this some water into his right hand. He sprinkles a little of this over the food, and the rest he pours from his hand in a circle round his 'plate,' repeating the gáyatri. Some sects also put a little pinch of rice in four places on the right side of the platter saying:—

ओं चित्राय नमः चित्रगुप्ताय नमः ।
यमाय नमः सर्वभूतेभ्यो नमः ॥

"Om. Oh! Chitra (a scribe of Yama), I adore thee.
Oh! Chitragupta (another scribe of Yama), I adore thee.
Oh! Yama (god of death and hell), I adore thee.
Oh! all living creatures, I adore you."

After this has been said, the meal is duly proceeded with. The ceremonial necessary before partaking of food seems very tedious, and must be very tantalizing to a hungry man. Use, however, is every thing, and from long practice the ceremony does not take so much time as might be supposed. The food is eaten with the right hand, but the water is always drunk from the left, that is, the water vessel must be taken up with the left hand and not the right. This is probably because the right hand has touched the mouth. The vessel from which the water is drunk must not touch the lips; it is held a little distance over the upturned mouth into which the fluid is then poured. Custom makes this an easy feat for the Hindu, whereas it would probably choke a European were he to attempt it. It is well known by all that the Hindu is very particular as to the water he drinks. It must be

ceremonially pure, though not necessarily chemically pure. In order to ensure its purity, it must be very carefully fetched and always kept in the kitchen where it cannot be touched. If a man or woman, in carrying the pots of drinking water from the river, tank, or well to the house, were to come near an outcaste or to come in contact with any impure person or thing, the water would have to be thrown away and fresh water brought. The person carrying it must also again bathe, and again carefully wash out the vessels. Indeed, many Brahmins are so particular in this respect, that if, on carrying the water, they were even to see a Pariah, they would throw it away and return for more.

The meal is concluded by each one taking a single sip of water, saying:—

> "Oh! water thou art become my protector.
> In the hell called rourava, the abode of the wicked,
> To those who for billions of years have suffered there,
> And beg for water, it is given:
> May it never be exhausted."

Evening prayer, which should be performed at sunset, is the same as that of the morning and noon sandhyávandanam, except that instead of the special prayer to the sun there is inserted one to Varuna, the Hindu Neptune,—the god of the waters.

इमं मे वरुण शृधी हव   मद्या च मृळ्य   त्वामव स्युराचके ।

> "O Varuna! hear my cry,
> Now fill me with happiness.
> I who am helpless come to thee."

The household gods are not again worshipped, as at noon, except that at the evening meal the food to be consumed is offered to them by what may be called the 'wave offering,' accompanied by the ringing of the bell, or the beating of the gong and the burning of the lights. The evening meal, or supper, is conducted

with much the same ceremonies as those described for the noon-day repast. It is usually taken late in the evening, say about eight or nine o'clock, as may be most convenient.

If on a journey and unable to reach the shelter of a suitable house or choultry (public rest-house), the Brahmin may cook and partake of his food in a grove or under a single tree, or in some other such place, although he may not be able to secure the privacy desirable. Still all the ritual must, as far as possible, be followed just the same as if he were in the sanctity of his own home. This way of taking food is called vanabhojanam, from vanam a forest or grove or garden and bhojanam food. If no suitable place can be found, or if there is no privacy, then a meal cannot be taken at all and the traveller must fast. The Hindu, however, is from habit and constitution better able to endure such personal privation than a European can.

Another kind of compromise is made when a person is too ill to bathe at all. In such an event, the invalid before partaking of food is, if a Vaishnava, sprinkled with pure water by some one present, who repeats three times the word pundarikáksha (the white lotus-eyed one,—one of the names of Vishnu) or, if sufficiently learned, he may say the following mantram:

अपवित्रः पवित्रवा सर्वावस्थां गतोऽपिवा ।
यःस्मरेत्पुंडरीकाक्षं स बाह्याभ्यंतरःशुचिः ॥

"Man, whether pure or impure,
Or in whatsoever plight he may be,
If he but repeat the name pundaríkáksha
He obtains both outward and inward purity."

If the sick person is a Saiva, the ceremony is different. He is rubbed with vibhúti,[1] or white clay,

[1] See chapter v. on the Sacred Marks.

with which the sacred marks are daubed on, and another kind of mantram is said which is as follows :—

त्रियंबकं यजामहे सुगंधिं पुष्टिवर्धनं ।

उर्वारुकमिवबंधनान्मृत्योर्मुक्षीय्यमामृतात् ॥

"Siva the three-eyed one we adore; he is fragrant, and he increases strength. May he deliver me from death as the gourd is parted from its stem."

Before retiring for the night, the pious Hindu will repeat a few prayers in very much the same way as he does on rising in the morning. A usual one for Smártas to use on this occasion is as follows :—

दुस्वप्नदुश्शकुनदुर्गतिदौर्मनस्य दुर्भिक्षदुर्व्यसनदुस्सहदुर्यशांसि ।

उत्पाततापविषभीतिमसद्ग्रहार्तिं व्याधींश्च नाशयतु मे जगतामधीशः ॥

"Bad dreams, evil omens, misfortune, evil thoughts,
Famine, evil desires, impatience, dishonour,
Accidents, grief, poisons, fears, evil stars,
Diseases, from all these may the lord of the worlds protect me."

All the rites and ceremonies now described are performed by males; the female really has nothing to do with rites and ceremonies. As an old Shástri put it, her vratam (religious observance) is pativratam. The word pati means husband or lord; but the religious instinct of women cannot be entirely suppressed, and they do perform some worship.

Though the temples are very numerous there is no regular going to service as with Christians. Each house has its own private chapel, where the daily worship is held. The priests in the temple bathe the god every day, and duly worship it there; the idea being that this is done vicariously for the followers of that particular god. On certain festivals and high-days, of which there are many, the people, both males and females, go to the temples to do púja to the god. They bow to the image

and make offerings of flowers or fruit and the like, and perhaps a few coins of money; but of church-going, in the ordinary sense of the word, there is none. There is no public religious teaching of any kind, and hence the dense ignorance of the bulk of the people, even as regards the simplest matters of their own religion.

The Hindu is by nature intensely religious for nothing but an inherent craving after the spiritual could cause a nation to submit to so burdensome a ritual. Religion is with him a thing of every-day life, and it pervades everything from the cradle to the grave. This religious instinct of the Hindus gives bright hopes of the future to those who are willing to patiently toil on, sowing the good seed of eternal life, and waiting God's own good time for the harvest. Then, perhaps, a nation may be born in a day and a whole people turn from dead works to serve the living God.

CHAPTER III.

THE HINDU WOMAN'S RELIGION.

स्त्रीधर्मः. (Stree Dharmah.)

"No sacrifice is allowed to women apart from their husbands, no religious rite, no fasting: as far only as a wife honours her lord, so far she is exalted in heaven." (Manu, v. 155.)

THOSE who defend Hinduism, and the low position occupied by Hindu women, say that this is the Kali-yuga, the iron age, or age of universal degeneracy, that in primitive times things were different, and that the status of woman was then higher than it is now. There may be, and doubtless there is, some truth in this statement. A text of Manu, frequently quoted, shows that in those times a man might perform religious rites together with his wife. The verse runs as follows:—

"To be mothers were women created, and to be fathers, men; religious rites, therefore, are ordained in the Veda to be performed by the husband together with the wife." (ix. 96.)

Still the woman is nothing without the man. The laws of Manu show most unmistakably that they were made by men and that their whole aim was to keep the other sex in complete submission, not only in matters of general behaviour but also in the sacred matter of religion. The woman must never dare to have a will of her own, or at any period of her life decide for herself in any thing:—

"By a girl or by a young woman, or by a woman advanced in years, nothing must be done, even in her own dwelling place, according to her mere pleasure." (v. 147.)

She must always be distrusted and looked upon with suspicion as capable of doing any wrong, or, as perhaps it would be more correct to say, as incapable of doing anything right. A king is directed to let his females be well tried and attentive, but their dress and ornaments are to be examined, lest some weapon should be concealed in them. They are to do him humble service with fans, water and perfume. (vii. 219.) The husband is directed never to eat with his wife nor to look at her when eating (iv. 43). She must never even mention his name, and she must be in such absolute subjection that no amount of outrage upon her sense of propriety or affections is to be resented or to cause estrangement.

"Though unobservant of approved usages, or enamoured of another woman, or devoid of good qualities, yet a husband must constantly be revered as a god by a virtuous wife." (v 154.)

A wife is to be considered as a mere maternal machine and domestic drudge. There are, no doubt, many instances where man is better than his creed and where woman rises to higher influence and status than the law lays down for them; but the fact remains that it is thus decreed:—

"Let the husband keep his wife employed in the collection and expenditure of wealth, in purification and female duty, in the preparation of daily food, and the superintendence of household utensils.

The production of children, the nurture of them when produced, and the daily superintendence of domestic affairs are peculiar to the wife." (ix. 11, 27.)

Such was the social status of woman even in the former and better ages, and, as if this were not enough, her very soul was also to be in subjection, and that religious instinct which is a glory to womanhood was to be denied free expression, and was bound in the chains of a cruel servitude. There is no actual improvement in this Kaliyuga, or degenerate age.

"Women have no business with the texts of the Veda; thus is the law fully settled. Having therefore no evidence of law and no knowledge of expiatory texts, sinful women must be as foul as falsehood itself; and this is a fixed rule." (ix. 18.)

The better side of human nature, cramped and confined though it be, will sometimes show itself; for no code devised of man can entirely eradicate the better promptings of the human heart. In Hindu story there are not wanting instances of a better appreciation of woman's qualities than is ever admitted in the cast-iron codes of this ancient system. Sir Monier Williams gives the following translation of the definition of a wife as found in the Mahábhárata:—

"A wife is half the man, his truest friend;
A loving wife is a perpetual spring
Of virtue, pleasure, wealth; a faithful wife
Is his best aid in seeking heavenly bliss;
A sweetly-speaking wife is a companion
In solitude, a father in advice,
A rest in passing through life's wilderness." [1]

There is also a most touchingly beautiful piece in the Rámayana to be found translated into English by Ward.[2] It purports to be the address of Sita to her husband Ráma. Ráma was banished by the king, his father Dasaratha, at the instigation of his third wife Kaikéya, who wished the succession for her own son. He was doomed to perpetual exile in the forest, and his wife expresses her determination to go with him. As a beautiful expression of tender affection I cannot refrain from quoting the piece at length. It serves to show that the affectionate nature of a true woman is ever the same, despite its surroundings.

"Son of the venerable parent! hear,
'Tis Seeta speaks. Say art not thou assur'd

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1 "Brahmanism and Hinduism," p. 389.

2 Ward, "History of the Literature and Mythology of the Hindus," vol. ii, p. 408.

That to each being his allotted time
And portion, as his merit, are assign'd
And that a wife her husband's portion shares?
Therefore with thee this forest lot I claim.
A woman's bliss is found, not in the smile
Of father, mother, friend, nor in herself:
Her husband is her only portion here,
Her heaven hereafter. If thou, indeed,
Depart this day into the forest drear,
I will precede, and smooth the thorny way.
O hero brave, as water we reject
In which our nutriment has been prepar'd,
So anger spurn, and every thought unkind,
Unworthy of thy spouse, and by thy side,
Unblam'd, and unforbidden, let her stay.
O chide me not; for where the husband is,
Within the palace, on the stately car,
Or wandering in the air, in every state
The shadow of his foot is her abode.
My mother and my father having left,
I have no dwelling-place distinct from thee.
Forbid me not, for in the wilderness,
Hard of access, renounc'd by men, and fill'd
With animals and birds of various kind,
And savage tigers, I will surely dwell.
This horrid wilderness shall be to me
Sweet as my father's house and all the noise
Of the three worlds shall never interrupt
My duty to my lord. A gay recluse,
On thee attending, happy shall I feel
Within this honey-scented grove to roam,
For thou e'en here canst nourish and protect;
And therefore other friend I cannot need.
To-day most surely with thee I will go,
And thus resolved, I must not be deny'd.
Roots and wild fruit shall be my constant food
Nor will I, near thee, add unto thy cares,
Not lag behind, nor forest-food refuse;
But fearless traverse ev'ry hill and dale,
Viewing the winding stream, the craggy rock,
And, stagnant at its base, the pool or lake.
In nature's deepest myst'ries thou art skill'd,
O hero—and I long with thee to view

Those sheets of water, fill'd with nymphœas,
Cover'd with ducks, and swans, and silvan fowl,
And studded with each wild and beauteous flow'r.
In these secluded pools I'll often bathe,
And share with thee, O Rama, boundless joy.
Thus could I sweetly pass a thousand years;
But without thee e'en heav'n would lose its charms.
A residence in heaven, O Raghuvu,
Without thy presence, would no joy afford.
Therefore, though rough the path, I must, I will,
The forest penetrate, the wild abode
Of monkeys, elephants, and playful fawn.
Pleas'd to embrace thy feet, I will reside
In the rough forest as my father's house.
Void of all other wish, supremely thine,
Permit me this request—I will not grieve
I will not burden thee—refuse me not.
But shouldst thou, Raghuvu, this prayer deny,
Know, I resolve on death—if torn from thee."

There is great difficulty in arriving at anything like a clear knowledge of the Hindu woman's religion. Little help can be gained from books and the Hindus themselves have very confused and conflicting ideas on the subject. I have consulted with learned Indian friends and others likely to have the best information, and I give it in as clear a way as it seems to me possible in anything so conflicting and confusing as Hinduism.

The main question is whether a woman can have any worship at all apart from her husband; and the answer is that she may and she may not. From the passage at the head of this chapter it will be seen that, as a rule, the woman has no religious status apart from her husband, and yet, as will be seen further on, she has a kind of daily worship of her own. This may be merely an unauthorized form of concession to the religious instincts of woman—a sort of thing allowed on sufferance as doing no harm to any one, though it may perhaps be of little good.

At the time of her marriage, at the marriage of her children, and at certain other periods and at some festivals, the wife must sit with her husband during the time he is engaged in the performance of certain acts of worship, though she seems to be there only as a kind of complement of her husband and takes no active part in the ceremonies. If a man has lost his wife, he cannot perform any sacrifices by fire (oupasana), which shows that the wife has some indirect connection with the ceremony, and also in part accounts for the anxiety of a widower to remarry. The woman is a part of her husband and so she worships through him; what he does, she does. The "Yajur Veda" says:—

अर्धोवा एष आत्मनोयत्पत्नी ॥

"The wife is half the self of her husband."

Upon this there is a comment by Brihaspati, somewhat as follows:—

"It has been said that the wife is half the self of her husband, and in consequence she shares equally with him all the good and evil done by him."

But the question still remains whether the woman can ordinarily join her husband in his prayers and sacrifices; and to this the answer must be in the negative. At the midday service when the man performs the ceremonies before taking food, the wife may attend upon him and hand him the things used by him, but she can take no real part with him. The woman is not a twice-born (dvija); nor does she wear the sacred thread (yagnópavíta) which is the mark of the second birth (upanayana). She cannot read the Vedas, or even hear them read, nor can she take part in her husband's sacred services (dévatárchana): she is outside it all. In reality she has no religious life in common with her husband.

In may be well just to go through the ordinary day with a woman and see what she really does, as far as

it bears upon this subject. The women of the household are always the first to rise in the morning, and this is usually long before daybreak. The early morning duties, after the performance of personal ablutions, consist of cleaning up those parts of the house that cannot be entered by people of lower castes, and cleaning the drinking pots and the numerous vessels that are used in a more or less ceremonious manner in a Hindu household. During the performance of these duties, which must be entirely done by or shared in by every good housewife, she generally sings in a low tone some song which is intended to rouse up the god Krishna, or Siva, as the case may be. A specimen of the songs thus sung is here given. It is a translation from one in the Telugu language, and is called mélukolupu, or the waking up:—

"Awake! Awake!

1. Awake! Awake! Krishna divine,
Awake to save thine own.
Thou lord of all, thou perfect one,
Grant us each heavenly boon.
Awake! Awake!

2. Awake! Awake! for Kings have come,
And Queens to thee adore.
They come to wave their ruby hands,
And praise thee ever more.
Awake! Awake!

3. Awake! Awake! thou loveliest one,
That earth or heaven e'er knew
Thy faithful with petitions come,
Full grace to them renew.
Awake! Awake!

4. Awake! Awake! Hari divine,
Thou god adored by all.
Thou free'st thine own from every foe,
And liftest those who fall.
Awake! Awake!

5. Awake! Awake! both old and young,
Their sorrows to remove,
Have sought thy holy presence now;
Oh! grant them every good.
Awake! Awake!

6. Awake! Awake! with favour see
The faithful at thy feet.
Adored of Sanaka behold
With grace each suppliant meet.
Awake! Awake!

7. Awake! Awake! e'en Parvati
Doth worship at thy shrine.
Oh! grant to us our every need,
Thine heart to us incline.
Awake! Awake!

8. Awake! Awake! I wait to bring
Sweet jasmine flowers to wave.
Thyself rouse quickly, Madhava!
Shrihari! come and save.
Awake! Awake!"

After her ablutions are over, the woman places upon her forehead the universally worn tilakam or mark with red powder made of saffron and other ingredients. The shape of the mark differs according to the deity worshipped by the wearer. Those, for instance, who worship Lakshmi (the wife of Vishuu) have merely a circular spot in the centre of the forehead; whilst the followers of Gauri (the wife of Siva) have a horizontal mark. This mark is always worn except during days of mourning and other times of ceremonial uncleanness. The absence of it is a sign of widowhood; and thus, whenever a woman washes her face, she must again renew the mark. The greater part of the forenoon is devoted to preparing the midday meal; and no food can be taken until this cooking is done. The partaking of food renders any one ceremoniously unfit either for cooking or for worship.

In a previous chapter I have described the ceremonies performed by the Hindu man before partaking of his first midday meal. The woman, too, has a kind of worship of her own before her midday meal, though it is of a comparatively simple character and occupies only a very short time. She has a metal box containing several images of brass or copper, representing various goddesses, usually Gauri or Lakshmi, or sometimes both of these, and perhaps an image of Subrahmanyan, the snake god, who is worshipped only by women. None of these images are consecrated, for a woman must not even touch any image that has been consecrated. She may take the images out and place them on a low stool underneath the sacred canopy (vitanam), which is in the sacred room or sanctuary of every house; or keep them in the box and worship them there, still being under or near the canopy. A little lamp is lit and placed near, and the worshipper says the sankalpam, which must always preface worship. It consists of mentioning the time and repeating the name of the place, and that of the family and the tribe, as well as the personal name of the worshipper. After this she goes on to say some simple prayers, asking for aid in any personal needs that may be pressing, or for divine help generally, and also a few words of praise. All this is accompanied by various bowings with clasped hands. The worshipper then proceeds to offer a bit of fruit, or sweetmeat, or betel and to sprinkle the images with pinches of sandal paste and coloured rice, and a few flowers. Sometimes she also waves before them a bit of lighted camphor, at the same time ringing a little bell or striking a small gong. The whole is concluded by walking round the spot (pradakshanam) three times and by prostration (sáshtánga namaskáram). The whole ceremony does not occupy as long in the doing as in the telling, and when it is over the things are replaced in the box,

which is then put away in its own proper niche. Among certain sections of Hindus this midday worship is somewhat different. The lingam worshippers, for instance, merely light a little lamp, and taking in the left hand the lingam from its silver or copper box which is suspended from their neck, perform to it some slight worship and wave towards it the lamp from the direction of the food which is about to be consumed. These things differ slightly amongst different sections of the people, but practically this description may be taken as sufficiently representative. It may also be said that this midday worship is all the regular worship that the Hindu woman ordinarily engages in from day to day. At night, when she lights the family lamp, the good housewife will make obeisance to the flame with closed hands repeating the following Sanskrit verse:—

दीपं ज्योतिः परब्रह्म दीपं ज्योतिः परायणं ।
दीपेन हरतेपापं संध्यादीप नमोऽस्तुते ॥

"The flame of this lamp is the Supreme God.
The flame of this lamp is the abode of the Supreme.
By this flame sin is destroyed.
O thou light of the evening we praise thee."

The woman does not, like the men, worship at the time of the evening meal. She simply says, as a kind of grace before meat, the words Govinda! Govinda! (a name of Vishnu), or Mahádéva! Mahádéva! (an appellation of Siva), before putting the first morsel into her mouth.

As in Christian countries the good mother takes her little ones and teaches them her holy Faith according to their capacity to understand, and also teaches them to pray at her knee, so the Hindu mother tells her children stories of the gods she has learned from the "Rámáyanam" and the "Mahábháratam" and other

religious books, and at worship time, when the little bell is sounded, the children are taught to assemble and, solemnly placing their hands together, to make obeisance to the gods.

A Hindu woman's worship is ordinarily confined to the brief midday service described above. Even this she is only supposed to do on sufferance, after having obtained the consent of her husband. A passage on this subject is quoted from the "Padma Purána":—

पतिरेव प्रियः स्त्रीणां ब्रह्मादिभ्योऽपि सर्वशः ।
आत्मानंच स्वभर्तारं मेकपिंडमनीषया ।
भर्तुराज्ञां विना नैव कंचिद्धर्मं समाचरेत् ॥

"The husband is the beloved of the wife.
He is more to her than all the gods.
Herself and her husband
Be it known are one person.
Without the consent of her husband
Any kind of worship she must not perform."

With the consent of her husband a wife may go on a short pilgrimage without him, when he is unable to accompany her, but this is very seldom. Strictly with his consent, she may also perform and keep vows, as for instance, to do without salt in her food for a stated period or to abstain from milk or various kinds of eatables for a given time. All this is done with the object of obtaining for herself or some one dear to her something desired—wealth, or children, or deliverance from disease. Apart from her husband, the woman has no religious status whatever, and practically very little even with him.

We now come to the important question as to how all this affects her state after death. Does the union and interdependence of husband and wife continue after death, and how can the one affect the other? There is good authority for the monstrous assertion,

which is, however, exactly in accordance with the whole of Hindu legislation and custom, that whilst the good deeds of the wife can materially benefit the husband as to his eternal state, nothing that he does, or can do, will have any effect upon her.[1] She stands or falls by her own merits alone. If she has been a bad woman, she must expiate her sins by numerous transmigrations and she may be cast into the purgatorial hell. I am aware that this matter is sometimes put in another light by writers on the subject. Ward, for instance, says:—"The merits and demerits of husband and wife are transferable to either in a future state: if a wife perform many meritorious works, and the husband die first, he will enjoy heaven as the fruit of his wife's virtuous deeds; and if the wife be guilty of many wicked actions, and the husband die first, he will suffer for the sins of his wife. In the apprehensions of a Hindu, therefore, marriage ought to be a very serious business."[1] Though I can find no authority for the first clause of this statement, the quotation from Brihaspati already given, shows that there may have been some such idea in ancient Vedic days. A Pundit friend told me that, whilst this quotation may express the state of things in a former Yuga, it certainly does not apply to this degenerate period of the world's history; and the following, which is taken from the code of Parásara, the most modern of the three great codes, speaks to the contrary. The code of Parásara belong to the present age, or Kaliyuga, and is of very great authority.

योषित्कृतापराधेन पुरुषस्य यथाप्रत्यवायः तथापुरुषा
नुष्ठितेन धर्मेण योषितोऽपि निष्कृतिर्भवतीति न शंकनीयं ॥

1 "History of the Literature and Mythology of the Hindu," vol. i, p. 184.

पतिलोकं न सा याति ब्राह्मणी या सुरां पिबेत् ।
इहैव सा शुनी भूत्वा सूकरीवोपजायते ॥
या ब्राह्मणी दुष्टा भवति तां देवाः पितृलोकं न नयंति ।
इहैवसा भवति क्षीणपुण्या आस्योल्का पिशाची भवति ॥

This is a question put by Parásara, and he himself gives the answer:—

"Why, it may be asked, is the wife not benefited by the good deeds of her husband just as the husband becomes hell-doomed by the evil deeds of his wife? The idea that the wife can be so benefited must not for a moment be entertained."

In support of this he gives a quotation from Yágnavalkya, a celebrated Rishi, to the following effect:—

"To her husband's world she will not go.
Whatever brahmin woman drinks fermented liquor,
She will be born again into the world a dog;
And after that she will born a pig."

Upon this Parásara makes the following comment:—

"Whatever brahmin woman become bad, she will by the gods be kept out of the ancestral heaven. Such a woman, being without merit, will be born again on this earth as a demon with a mouth emitting flames of fire."

The Pundits of the present day appear to take these quotations as a proof that a bad woman cannot be benefited by the good deeds of her husband. If the woman is a dutiful wife she may obtain a share of the celestial bliss of her husband and her good deeds may be reckoned to his account, even though he is not a good man; but if she be a bad woman, nothing that her husband, or any one else, can do will be for her of any avail.

I now deal with the Hindu woman as a widow, for her condition as regards religion becomes materially changed after the death of her husband. Although the widow is precluded from taking any part whatever in the ordinary family rites and ceremonies, and although

she may be reckoned as dead to all social life, still she can, according to Hinduism, very materially assist her husband after his death and by her prayers and good deeds hasten his final beatitude. It is laid down that the chief way in which she can do this is by ascending his funeral pile and burning herself alive with his dead body. Happily the Government will no longer allow these religious murders and suicides, but there is no doubt whatever that they were formerly carried out to an enormous extent, and, if the strong hand of British law were removed, it is most probable that these monstrous cruelties would be again perpetrated.[1]

"There are," it is stated, "35,000,000 of hairs on the human body. The woman who ascends the pile with her husband, will remain so many years in heaven. As the snake-catcher draws the serpent from its hole, so she rescuing her husband (from hell), rejoices with him. The woman who expires on the funeral pile with her husband purifies the family of her mother, her father, and her husband. If the husband be a Brahminicide, an ungrateful person, or a murderer of his friend, the wife by burning with him purges away his sins. There is no virtue greater than a virtuous woman's burning herself with her husband. No other effectual duty is known for virtuous women, at any time after the death of their lords, except casting themselves into the same fire. As long as a woman, in her successive transmigrations, shall decline burning herself, like a faithful wife, on the same fire with her deceased lord, so long shall she not be exempted from springing again to life in the body of some female animal."

The same writer also quotes as follows from the "Brahma Purána":—

"If the husband be out of the country when he dies, let the virtuous wife take his slippers (or any thing else which belongs to his dress), and binding them (or it) on her breast, after purification, enter a separate fire.[2]

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[1] Ward takes from the writings of Angira, a saint of the first and most holy age (Krutayugam), a passage bearing on this subject. See "History of the Literature and Mythology of the Hindus," vol. iii, p. 308.

[2] Ibid., p. 309.

If sati or self-immolation is not performed, the widow may effect her husband's final good by a strict following out of the rules and regulations laid down by authority for such cases. I can find no authoritative statement on this point, but it is a generally entertained opinion amongst Hindus. They say that the general drift of the following quotations from Manu, and similar declarations by other authors, is to that effect. The tendency of all the legislation on the subject appears to be towards influencing or terrorizing the woman into complete and abject submission to her husband. This is her religion, and it is only by following out these injunctions she can hope for merit here or for happiness hereafter. Not only for life is this submission to be manifested, but even death does not dissolve the bonds, as far as she is concerned. All her hopes for the future lie in her continually manifesting by a life of the most intense misery her faithfulness to the memory of her lord and master.

"A faithful wife who wishes to attain in heaven the mansion of her husband, must do nothing unkind to him be he living or dead.

Let her emaciate her body, by living voluntarily on pure flowers, roots, and fruits; but let her not, when her lord is deceased, even pronounce the name of another man.

Let her continue till death forgiving all injuries, performing hard duties, avoiding every sensual pleasure, and cheerfully practising the incomparable rules of virtue which have been followed by such women as were devoted to one husband.

A virtuous wife ascends to heaven, though she has no child, if, after the decease of her lord, she devotes herself to pious austerity." (Manu, v. 156-158, 160.)

This of the woman. A little further on the law is thus laid down for the man:—

"Having thus kindled sacred fires and performed funeral rites for his wife, who died before him, he may marry again and again light the nuptial fire." (Manu, v. 168.)

I have now given some notion of the nature of the religion and the religious life of a Hindu woman. All that has been said has to do with the females of the upper castes. As regards the religion of the lower castes and of the outcastes, there is very little to be noticed. Their religion, as a rule, is little more than demonolatry or fetichism, and that very often of the lowest kind. The women are very particular to put upon their foreheads the red mark, but of ordinary worship throughout the day either by men or women there is practically none at all. They are all intensely superstitious, and those of them who may be Vaishnavas (worshippers of Vishnu) and who wear upon the forehead the mark of that deity, do, when they put on the marks in the early morning, both men and women, make obeisance to the rising sun, but that seems to be the sum total of the ordinary daily worship. It is a universal custom at night, when the family lamp is lit, for the women to make obeisance to the flame, but there does not appear to be anything else in the shape of evening worship. In any time of trouble or sickness, especially during the prevalence of any epidemic like cholera or small-pox, or at marriages and other festal seasons, and on the occasion of any family event, worship of various kinds is performed, chiefly by the women. The Sudras and those of the like class will go to the village temple with offerings of fruit, flowers and coloured powder for the temple deity, which, after being presented, are distributed to the neighbours who may be present. The non-caste women, who may not go to the village temple at such seasons, adorn a bit of the inner wall of the house with cowdung or saffron, upon which white or red horizontal lines are drawn, and to this obeisance is made and simple offerings of cooked food and fruit or flowers are presented. Besides this there is the sacred tree and the simple village idol, often a mere group of shapeless stones, and to these, at certain times,

the village women pay worship. Sometimes also they will go to festivals or on a pilgrimage to some shrine that may be within their reach. They are strong believers in transmigration and they think that their future birth will be affected by their good or evil deeds, but, practically, they may be said to have very little religion at all, as distinct from intense superstition and belief in demonolatry of the most degrading kind.

This shows how low a position is assigned to woman in Hindu theology, and the only wonder is that long ere this she has not broken the shackles that would bind her very soul and has asserted her equality to man in the eyes of God. There is, however, hope that a change for the better in this respect is really being effected. India is gradually waking up from her long lethargy and the women of India also are being affected. It may be true that as yet of the vast mass comparatively few women are reached by the rays of light that are beginning to penetrate even into the inner recesses of Indian homes; but something has been done, and sufficient evidence is manifest to prove that the new life has begun. The whole future of India's greatness is bound up in the emancipation of her women. This can only be done effectually by the spread of that Divine Faith which alone, of all the creeds of the earth, gives woman her true status as the equal with and true complement of man, and which thus makes declaration on this matter:—

"The woman is the glory of the man. For the man is not of the woman; but the woman of the man. Neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man. . . . . . . Neither is the man without the woman; neither the woman without the man, in the Lord. For as the woman is of the man, even so is the man also by the woman; but all things of God." (1 Cor. xi, 7-9, 11, 12.)

CHAPTER IV.

THE HINDU SACRED THREAD.

यज्ञोपवीतं. (Yajnópavītam).

"In the eighth year from the conception of a Brahman, in the eleventh from that of a Kshatriya, and in the twelfth from that of a Vaisya, let the father invest the child with the mark of his class." (Manu, ii. 36.)

ONE of the many peculiarities that strike a stranger in India is that many Hindus have a cord or skein of thread over the left shoulder, hanging down under the right arm. It is worn as a sash would be. Probably few, except the Hindus themselves, could tell why this cord is worn; why certain persons have it whilst others have it not; or even how or of what it is made. This article of dress or adornment forms, however, a very important factor in the Hindu cult. The yajnó-pavítam, as it is called, or the sacred thread of the Hindu, is the outward and visible mark that the wearer is a Dvija, or twice-born. It is a very much prized and a very sacred badge and commands respect and even adoration.

If we enquire who are privileged to assume this distinction, we find the matter very clearly defined by the ancient Hindu law-giver. In the quotation at the head of this chapter, it is clear that the Brahmans, Kshatriyas, and Vaisyas must be thus invested. In another place it is distinctly stated that none but the

three twice-born classes are entitled to the distinction :—

"The three twice-born classes are the sacerdotal, the military, and the commercial; but the fourth, or servile, is once-born, that is, has no second birth from the gáyatri, and wears no thread." (Manu, x. 4.)

This is the law; but others besides these three privileged classes assume the distinction. It is not safe, therefore, to conclude that every wearer of the sacred thread must necessarily be a Brahmin or one of the other two highest castes. The goldsmiths, the weavers, certain classes of fishermen and others wear it. The explanation is that the goldsmith caste, many of whom are carpenters and workers in brass and copper, are themselves a class of Brahmins; at least they assume the distinction. They have their own prescribed share in the Vedas and their own ritual. They have an upanayanam or second-birth ceremony, and are considered dvijas, or twice-born; hence this privilege in the matter of the thread, as well as in many others that are peculiar to Brahmins. The goldsmith caste are said to be the descendants of Brahmin women and Kshatriya men; and this fact, together with the rights above mentioned, appears to be acknowledged by the Brahmins themselves; yet, they do not appear to command much respect as a caste. This may be on account of their mixed origin. Until recent years, for instance, they were not allowed to celebrate their marriages with public processions, to use a palanquin, or to ride a horse. It is said that about thirty years ago there was much disturbance in Masulipatam when, in India through the freedom resulting from the British rule this caste first began to have marriage processions and, in other ways, to assert themselves. Now it is quite an acknowledged thing, for it has become what is known as ma'múl (custom) and so no

one interferes. They are not, as a rule, even now, allowed to enter temples. When they are permitted to do so, it is only to that part in which Sudras are allowed. A case recently came before the law courts in Masulipatam arising out of the attempt of a goldsmith to enter a Siva temple for worship. I believe it was eventually decided that a member of this caste could not enter a temple, except by the permission of the Brahmin priest in charge. The question of the social and religious status of the goldsmith caste is a most vexed one which gives rise to much controversy. It shows that not all wearers of the thread or cord are considered of equal rank.

I now make a slight digression to say a little as to the denial of the liberty of an individual to dress or to go as he pleases. There are very binding rules and regulations on these points. They are the outcome of caste customs, which, whatever may be the real rights of the matter from a legal point of view, are very real and strict in actual life. Theoretically, for example, any British subject has the right to use the public road in the way and manner of others, whatever may be his degree; but, practically, this is not so. A low caste man, in going through a respectable public street, inhabited by high-caste people, must take off his shoes and turban and shut up his umbrella, and, if he should be riding, he must descend from his horse and humbly walk through on foot. Even if a Sudra should be riding and happen to pass a superior person, as a Pandit, or high official, he must descend and walk past on foot until he is well past the dignitary, when he may remount and go on his way. A case quite recently came before the law court in a district where a native Pastor of one of the Christian communities was severely beaten, because he dared to ride through a respectable public thoroughfare. As a man of low caste origin, he should have humbly descended and have gone through on foot.

To return, however, to the subject more immediately in hand, others such as weavers and fishermen appear unlawfully to assume the privilege of wearing the sacred thread; but, although their custom is not interfered with, no value is set upon it by orthodox Hindus. They cannot, for example, read the Vedas or even hear them read. Authority to do this, in the case of lawful thread-wearers, is conveyed by the ceremony of upanayanam, or second spiritual birth, of which the thread is the outward symbol. In these modern days, some other classes of Sudras have also adopted the yajnópavítam merely to add to their own importance; but, in all such cases, it is of no true religious value. I have heard of a case in the Orissa country where a certain Rája of the Sudra caste made himself important by assuming authority to invest people of his own caste with the thread. Some of them, to please him, appear to have submitted to the investiture, and adopted the thread—thus adding to the number of the unlawful wearers of this coveted mark of distinction. It is said that one unlucky wight who, on a visit to that country, was presented with this badge of honour, was, on his return home, deprived of the same and well beaten for his presumption by his indignant neighbours.

Having thus seen who are entitled to wear the sacred thread, I now pass on to mention some particulars of the thread itself and also of the mode of investiture. Originally there appears to have been some difference in the kind of thread worn, according to the class of the wearer. Thus:—

> "The sacrificial thread of a Brahmin must be made of cotton, so as to be put on over his head in three strings; that of a Kshatriya of sana thread only; that of a Vaisya of woollen thread." (Manu, ii. 44.)

This is the law and probably in ancient times the material of which the thread was made did thus differ, according to the caste of the wearer; but in the

present day no such difference is seen. The cord is universally made of cotton. A peculiar kind of very fine cotton is what ought to be employed, but ordinarily the common cotton is used. The threads are supposed to be prepared by Brahmins. Perhaps other than the Brahmins and Vaisyas are not so particular as to the manufacture, but these two castes are very careful in this respect. The threads can generally be obtained in any ordinary bazaar, but the very orthodox, in order to ensure their purity, will frequently procure their supply from the house of the Brahmins who may happen to be engaged in the manufacture.

The yajnópavítam consists of several skeins of cotton thread. Each thread consists of three strands, each skein has three threads, and a married man's cord must consist of not less than three skeins. The number three enters very largely into the structure of the cord itself, and the ceremony of investiture. This is said to represent the three gods, Brahma, Vishnu, and Siva; the three sacrificial fires; three divisions of time —morn, noon and night; and the three worlds—heaven, earth and hell. Each skein is tied with a peculiar knot called Brahma's knot. It is made by making three turns with the threads and by so tying the knot that the ends do not appear on the outside. In making each knot the following incantation is repeated by the maker:—

ओं कांरमुच्चरन् ब्रह्म- सूत्रं बध्वाथ धारयेत् ।
कर्मशुद्धित्वमाप्नोति सर्वदेवात्मकत्वत: ॥

"Pronouncing the word Om, the Brahma
Sutram must be tied, and afterwards worn.
(The wearer) will receive purity in all his rites,
It being the personification of all the gods."

A youth, if a bachelor, when first invested with the cord, receives only a single skein, and he cannot wear

more than a single skein until he is married, when he must wear, at least, three skeins. The Brahmin youth must be invested with his cord when he is about seven or eight years of age. He cannot be married until thus invested, but he may, and in fact often does, marry a day or two after the ceremony. Amongst some of the Banians or Vaisyas, it is customary to defer the upanayanam until immediately before marriage.

The ceremony of investiture is as follows. On the appointed day a fire is lighted, round which the relatives and friends of the novice are seated. This fire is a very important feature of the upanayanam. The whole ceremony is called the agni káryam or fire worship. It is kept alight during the whole four days during which the ceremony lasts, and it is the proper thing to feed it, as far as possible, with the twigs of certain kinds of trees,—principally those of the Indian fig tribe. At the repeating of the various mantrams which form part of the ritual, ghee is poured on to the fire as an offering. The father of the youth to be invested takes a thread of nine strands and puts it upon his son. This is not the true yajnópavítam, nor has it the Brahma knot, neither are mantrams said over it. After some time, during which various rites are performed, and the ears of the boy are bored for earrings and then adorned with thin rings of gold, the true cord is produced—a single skein of three threads. To this is attached a bit of the skin of a male deer, or, if procurable, a long strip of this skin is worn as a sash together with the cord. Deer skin is considered to be very pure, and also to be capable of imparting purity. For this reason untanned deer skin is much employed for covering the boxes and other receptacles, in which the household gods, and things pertaining thereto are kept. It is also much used as a mat to sit upon when performing the daily rites. Mention is made in the Smritis (the teaching of

the Sages) of the purity acquired by wearing deer skin, and there are several injunctions on the matter in the laws of Manu. For example:—

"Let the students in theology wear for their mantles the hides of black antelopes, of common deer or of goats, with lower vests of woven sana of cshumá and of wool, in the direct order of their classes." (Manu, ii. 41.)

The piece of deer skin is worn with the thread for several months, when it is taken off, with some short ceremony, at a temple. When the father puts on the true cord, he repeats the yajnópavítam mantram, the novice saying it after him. This mantram is as follows:—

यज्ञोपवीतं परमं पवित्रं प्रजापतेर्यत्सहजं पुरस्तात् ।
आयुष्यमग्र्यं प्रतिमुंच शुभ्रं यज्ञोपवीतं बलमस्तु तेजः ॥

"This most hallowed yajnópavítam,
In former times with Brahma born,
Author of longevity; wear it, it is pure,
May this yajnópavitam become my strength and glory."

As the new and true cord is put on, the imitation one which was first used is taken off. This completes the investiture, and the father at once proceeds to teach the novice the gáyatri prayer. This is done with great care and secrecy. A cloth is thrown over the heads of both father and son, and, the sacred words are whispered into the ears, in as low a whisper as possible, so that the holy words may not fall upon the ears of any uninitiated person. The upanayanam is now complete, and the lad is now a true dvija, duly entitled to read the Vedas, and to perform any of the religious rites of his caste.

Immediately following this investiture the youth proceeds to ask alms of those present, beginning with his mother and then his father and afterwards the other relatives or friends. This act is supposed to

intimate a readiness on the part of the supplicant to provide for himself and his religious preceptor. All this takes place on the first day, but for three more days the festival is kept up, during which the novice is instructed in the morning, midday and evening prayers and in other ceremonial observances. There is always much feasting and rejoicing upon these occasions. Musicians are hired to enliven the company and friends and relatives are entertained according to the ability of the host.

A new cord must be put on every year on the occasion of a certain festival. This festival is called srávanálapaurnavami—the full moon in the month of Srávana (July-August). Should the cord be broken during the year, a new one must at once be put on. If a man has a cord of five skeins, a broken thread or two does not matter; but a bachelor must have his one skein perfect, without even a single thread being broken, and a married person must have at least three perfect skeins, every thread of which must be perfect. There are also certain kinds of defilement, as for instance touching a Pariah, that necessitate the putting on a new thread and the casting away the old one. In these days, the orthodox are not always so very particular as this, but this is the rule. Should the cord become broken, or any defilement contracted, no food can be taken until the old is replaced by a new one.

If a strict orthodox Brahmin, in passing through the bazaar, accidentally comes into contact with a Pariah, or in any other way becomes ceremonially defiled, he must get a new cord, which he cannot touch until he has bathed, and thus purified himself from the defilement. After bathing he takes the new cord and, dipping it into water, spreads it out on two brass or copper vessels. He then touches it with some of the pigment he uses for putting the sacred mark on his

forehead. After that he walks round the vessels three times, from right to left, repeating the gáyatri prayer. Then he takes the cord, skein by skein, and puts it on saying the mantram, or consecration prayer, used at the first investiture, repeating the same for each skein.

When he has thus put on the whole of the skeins, he takes off the old cord, repeating a mantram which says:—

"May this old yajnópavítam become my strength and glory."

The old thread is disposed of by throwing it into a river or some other water, if there should be any at hand. The ancient lawgiver says:—

"His girdle, his leather mantle, his staff, his sacrificial cord, and his ewer, he must throw into the water, when they are worn out or broken, and receive others hallowed by mystical texts." (Manu, ii. 64.)

Should no river, or other suitable water be conveniently near, the old thread is rolled up and thrown on to the top of the house. This is to prevent its being trodden under foot, or in any other such way defiled. This completes the re-investiture. The defiled one is now ceremonially pure, and he can proceed to perform the daily rites which must be gone through before he can partake of food.

The sacred thread is usually worn over the left shoulder, hanging down across the body under the right arm, and, as the orthodox Hindu is not encumbered with much by way of covering for the upper part of his person, it forms a very noticeable object. On certain occasions, however, the position of the thread is changed. At the time of performing the annual ceremony for deceased ancestors, the position is exactly reversed. It is then placed over the right shoulder and hangs down on the left side. On certain other occasions, it is worn as a garland round the neck: whilst at others it is

placed up over the ears to prevent its being defiled. Usually when saying the gáyatri prayer, the thread is taken hold of by the thumb; and on reciting various mantrams it is used somewhat as a rosary—the worshipper winding it round the fingers to keep count of the number of times the mantram is repeated. The ancient law-giver Manu, makes various allusions to the sacred thread other than those quoted above. He speaks of the sinfulness of omitting the sacred investiture (xi. 63); and he lays down the rule that no one must use a sacerdotal string that has been before used by another (iv. 66).

The yajnópavítam is to the Hindu an all important thing, being the sign of the second or spiritual birth. Without his cord the Brahmin is not a Brahmin. He is nothing better than an outcaste, he cannot perform any ceremony or partake of any food, nay, he must not even swallow his own spittle. He may breathe, and that is about all he can do until the lost or defiled cord is duly replaced with all proper ceremony.

A Sanyási does not wear this cord, for he has entered the fourth or last stage of the Brahmin's life.

CHAPTER V.

THE HINDU SACRED MARKS.

पुंड्रम्. (Pundram).

"He who has no right to distinguishing marks, yet gains a subsistence by wearing false mark of distinction, takes to himself the sin committed by those who are entitled to such marks, and shall again be born from the womb of a brute animal." (Manu, iv. 200).

No mention is made in the Vedas of the pundrams or sacred marks, but the Smrities and Purânams take particular notice of them. Since, however, the Smrities are based upon the Vedas, it is inferred that some parts of the Vedas are now lost, and that those lost portions probably contain the injunctions on this point. It is said that these sacred marks were originally intended to distinguish the four castes; but however that may be, it is clear that in the present day they are used to distinguish the members of the various religious sects or divisions.

All Hindus may roughly be divided into the worshippers of Vishnu and the worshippers of Siva. These, however much they may differ in general, agree pretty much in some main points, and they are all good Hindus. A man may leave the one sect and join the other, if he so desires and if he can at the same time bear the cost of the necessary ceremonies. Brahma, the first person in the Hindu Triad (Trimúrti), is not, as a matter of fact, worshipped at all. Vishnu and

Siva, in their various forms and incarnations, are the real objects of Hindu worship.[1]

The sacred marks most easily seen are those worn upon the forehead. They are of two kinds—the trident shaped mark called urdhva pundram or upright pundram, worn by the votaries of Vishnu, and the three horizontal lines drawn across the forehead, called tiryak pundram or horizontal pundram, worn by the worshippers of Siva.

Besides these marks on the forehead some are also worn on various parts of the body, the number differing according to caste. The strict Brahmins have no less than twelve, namely, one on each arm and shoulder, one on the front and one on the back of the neck, one on the breast, one on the middle of the back, three on different parts of the stomach and one on the forehead. A thirteenth is sometimes worn on the crown of the head. The Kshatriyas should have only four, the Vaisyas two, and the Sudras one, the one on the forehead; but practically many others besides Brahmins, if they wish to be very religious, wear all these marks on most of the parts mentioned.

The forehead mark is the chief and most prominent one. That of the worshippers of Vishnu is most unmistakable and, when put on by the very orthodox

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1 Even more important than the gods worshipped are the three chief schools of philosophy, of some one of which all orthodox Hindus are followers. The first is that of Advaita or non-dualism. "The Universe exists, but merely as a form of the one eternal Essence. All animate and inanimate things are but parts of the deity, and have no real existence of their own." The second is the Dvaita or dualism, which holds that "God is supreme yet essentially different from the human soul, and from the material world, both of which have a real and eternally distinct existence." A third is the Visishtádvaita, or doctrine of unity with attributes. This doctrine like that of Advaita, holds that the Deity and the universe are one, but it goes further in holding that the Deity is not void of form or quality. It regards him as "being endowed with all good qualities and a two-fold form —the supreme spirit Paramátma, or cause, and the gross one, the effect, the universe or matter." (Wilson.)

in extra broad stripes, has a most ferocious aspect. The ordinary Vaishnava uses a white clay called tirumani, found in various parts of the country, and sold at a very cheap rate in the ordinary bazaars. In the case of the Madhvas, however, of whom particular mention will be made further on, the clay used in making the marks is of a yellowish colour, and is called gópíchandanam, which, to be of the purest kind, should be brought from Dwáraka in Guzerát. The ordinary Vaishnavas rub the clay in the palm of the left hand with a little water, and then with a finger of the right hand or with a strip of metal kept for the purpose, take it and draw a broad line from the centre of one eyebrow to that of the other; then from the centre, or the outer end of each eyebrow they draw a perpendicular streak right up the forehead. This mark is said to represent the foot of Vishnu (Vishnu pádam). In the centre of the two perpendicular lines, and in a line with the nose, a third but narrower perpendicular streak is drawn. The colour chosen is red or yellow according to fancy, but yellow is said to be the most orthodox. This central mark is in honour of Lakshmi, the wife of Vishnu, and is called sríchúrnam, the whole forming a trident. The marks on the other parts of the body are also made with three perpendicular streaks, two white and one red or yellow, but they are not so carefully made as those on the forehead, which are often drawn in quite an artistic manner. As a rule these body marks are merely a broad smear of white with a coloured dab in the middle, though the one on the chest is sometimes more carefully made.

All the wearers of this trident mark are worshippers of Vishnu, but they may be either worshippers of that deity alone, as the Rámánujas; or they may be votaries of Vishnu and at the same time pay honour to Siva. The followers of Rámánuja are called amongst the Telugus Ácháryas and amongst the Tamils they are

called Iyengars. Some of the Smartha sect, that is, those who professedly worship Sivà in particular, and yet pay reverence to Vishnu, also wear the trident marks of Vishnu, instead of the Siva mark which is usually worn by the Smarthas. The Rámánujas, a sect founded in the twelfth century by Rámánujácharya, hold the Visishtádvaita doctrine. They are very hostile to the worshippers of Siva, who are of the Advaita School. They carry their love for their sacred mark to an extraordinary length. They imprint their trident on the portals of their doors, on the walls of their houses, on their household utensils, and on their carts and boats and books. In the same way they allow their dislike for the Saivas to run to extremes. If they come across a stone in a mouthful of rice, they call it the lingam (the emblem of Siva) and say, "Let us bite well, we have at least killed one wretched lingam." It is also a saying that, even if pursued by a tiger, a Rámánuja would not to save himself enter into a Siva temple.

Vaishnavas are divided into two great sects, the Vadagalais and the Tengalais, the doctrines of which differ very materially from each other. The members of these sects may be distinguished by the shape of the mark worn. The Tengalais carry the white mark some way down the nose, whilst the Vadagalais do not.

Whilst preparing the clay with which to daub on the marks, the devout are supposed to recite several mantrams, such as :—

मृत्तिके हन मे पापं यन्मया दुष्कृतं कृतं ।
मृत्तिके ब्रह्मदत्तासि काश्यपेनाभिमंत्रिता ॥

"O Earth! do thou destroy my sin,
Whatever sin has been committed by me.
O Earth; thou gift of Brahma,
Thou hast been purified with mantrams by Kasyapa."[1]

[1] A famous Sage.

These mantrams should be said by all worshippers of Vishnu, that is by all those who wear the trident; but only the very devout say them. Probably a very large number say nothing at all. They simply put on the marks for appearance sake, as a matter of form; or perhaps with the idea that the mere marks themselves will have some religious effect upon their soul, for the Hindu is extremely superstitious.

Besides the wearers of this trident, there are other worshippers of Vishnu who wear a different mark. They are called Madhvás, and they hold the Dvaita doctrine (the dual order of things); indeed they are the true Dvaitas, and they take their origin from the sage Madhváchárya who taught in the 13th century. These worship Vishnu, but they also hold Siva in honour. Their forehead mark is a straight black line drawn from the nose to the roots of the hair, and passing through a red round mark made with a mixture of turmeric and lime. The black line is made with charcoal, which, to be pure, should be taken from the fire before the god Vishnu. This black line is called angáram, from the charcoal with which it is made. In some parts there are those who also put on the two upright white facial marks with gópíchandanam, only somewhat narrow: others again make these lines in red. Usually however the forehead is only adorned with the upright black line and red spot.

The Madhvás also impress on various parts of the body and on the forehead and temples symbols of Vishnu, made with copper stamps, dipped in moistened gópíchandanam, to more clearly represent what the ordinary marks are supposed to signify. These are of five kinds, the conch (sankha), the wheel (chakra), the club (gada), and the sword (khadgam), which are the things in the four hands of Vishnu, and the lotus (padma).

The Madhvás, in putting on their marks, are supposed to repeat mantrams like the others do, but they have one special one:—

ब्रह्मघ्नो वाथ गोघ्नो वा घातुकस्सर्वपापकृत् ।
गोपीचंदनसंपर्कात् मुक्तो भवति तत्क्षणात् ॥

"Be he a murderer of a Brahmin, or of a cow,
A cruel tyrant, guilty of all manner of sins,
By contact with this gópíchandanam
He immediately becomes an heir of heaven."

The Siva mark is three horizontal lines made with vibhúti, or the burnt ashes of cowdung. This, to be of the purest kind, should be obtained from the fire of a sacrificing Brahmin. These ashes are made up into balls or tablets and sold in the bazaar, but, if from poverty or from any other cause these cannot be procured, a little ash will be taken from the ordinary household fire-place and used for the purpose. The ordinary fuel is the cowdung which has been dried in the sun. All the worshippers of Siva wear these three horizontal marks on various parts of the body, as the Vaishnavas do theirs, except that the shape is different. They are always in horizontal lines and there are no coloured marks except on the forehead. The marks are made thus; a little of the ashes is rubbed in the left hand with some water, and the mixture is applied with three fingers of the right hand. Those on the various parts of the body are, when worn, done somewhat roughly; but the marks on the forehead are drawn with more care. The Sivas are divided into two main divisions, the Smárthas, those who also honour Vishnu, and Lingadháris, or wearers of the lingam, who adhere solely to the worship of Siva. The latter of these may be distinguished by having the vibhúti marks drawn across the eyes and by the side of the ears. A round spot is made in the centre of the forehead which is usually red, and which is called

akshatam. Theoretically this spot should be formed of a few grains of rice stuck on with sandalwood paste. A division of the Lingadháris, however, who are Sudras, and who are called Jangams, always have this mark white, made with the vibhúti. Sometimes, however, they make it with sandalwood paste, but this is against rule, and is not done by the very strict. All Hindus, both the worshippers of Vishnu and those who adore Siva, use sandalwood paste for the sake of its sweet smell. It is put on after the daily ceremonies are over, and just before sitting down to food.

In putting on the marks, the Smartha Saiva should say the usual mantrams. This is because he holds Vishnu in honour. The Lingadhári, however, who holds no allegiance to Vishnu at all, only repeats this one:—

त्रियंबकं यजामहे सुगंधिं पुष्टवर्धनं ।
उर्वारुकमिव बंधनात् मृत्योर्मुक्षीय मामृतात् ॥

"We worship that (the vibhúti) which appertains to the three-eyed one Siva;
It is fragrant and increases physical strength.
As a cucumber is separated from its stalk (when ripe)
May this separate (or deliver) me from ever-present death."

At times, some varieties of these marks are seen. For instance, some of the modern Saivas wear, in public, only one horizontal mark of sandalwood paste, drawn through the centre spot across the forehead. This is sometimes made with the help of the yajnópavítam, but even this is supposed to be three, and at any rate, the three lines made with vibhúti ought to be worn when taking meals. Those Saivas who worship Párvati, the wife of Siva, wear a small mark of vermilion under the central spot between the eyebrows.

All the marks are supposed to be put on at least twice a day; in the morning on rising, and at midday

after bathing before food. Many in these modern days do not put on the marks in the early morning. It is only the real orthodox Hindu who does this. Before taking food, it is imperative, and no one, even the most careless and irreligious, omits it then. No ceremony and no act of worship can be performed without these marks. In every Hindu house there is a receptacle of some kind, a basket or box, in which the ingredients for putting on the marks are kept, with any stamps or instruments that may be used, and perhaps a little bit of looking glass to assist in the operation. This receptacle is usually for the general use of the household, though a guest or visitor who may be staying in the house will have access to the same, if he should not have brought his own "dressing case" with him. Just as it is necessary for a European guest to comply with the usages of society as regards various details of dress and manners, so it is incumbent on the Hindu guest to conform to the habits of his fellows in such matters. Indeed it is not only a matter of conforming to the laws of good breeding, it is a vital matter of religion, and a Hindu dare not, at the peril of his soul, sit down to food without having first adorned himself with the marks of his religion. If it were possible for any ill-advised person so to forget himself, a thing difficult even to imagine, he would have to dine alone, for no one would dare to consort with so bold an Iconoclast.

As a mark of mourning the red or yellow line in the centre of the Vishnu mark (sríchúrnam), and the red spot in the centre of the forehead of the Smártha Saivas (akshata) is changed to white for ten or more days. The Mádhvas simply omit the red spot, wearing only the black streak. The Smártha Saivas and Mádhvas also follow this custom on fast days.

No woman who has a husband has need of sacred marks, as she has no ceremonies to perform requiring

them. Her husband does all her religious ceremonies for her and he is her god. The wife does, however, perhaps for ornament, wear a mark in the centre of the forehead. It is usually made with vermilion, but sometimes it is black. It varies a little in shape, being either somewhat horizontal or perpendicular, according as her husband is a Saiva or a Vaishnava, but it is generally merely a round spot. This spot is omitted altogether during mourning and also during a certain period. Widows have to perform certain ceremonies for themselves, and they wear the same marks as their husbands wore; only they must be those that exhibit mourning, that is to say, the marks must not be coloured ones. The Vaishnava widows do not wear the full white mark on the face, but only a line between the eyes and a little way on the nose. Some Vaishnava widows, in the present day, do wear the srîchûrnam, or coloured central line, only in that case they do not put on the side white lines. Probably, however, those who do this are comparatively few in number. Married women are in the habit of rubbing their faces and feet with water in which saffron has been mixed. A widow, to whom all enjoyable and pleasant things are denied, must not thus adorn herself.

These various details remind us of the Christian mark, the mark of the cross made upon the forehead at baptism, or of that seal mentioned in the book of the Revelation where the angel "Sealed the servants of our God in the forehead."[1] And the servant of Christ, the true Incarnation of the Living God, cannot but rejoice that, though slowly still none the less surely, the Trident is giving way to the Cross, the marks of Vishnu and Siva to the marks of the Lord Jesus.

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[1] Revelation, vii. 3.

CHAPTER VI.

THE HINDU TONSURE.

शिखा (Sikha).

"By the command of the Veda, the ceremony of tonsure should be legally performed by the three first classes in the first or third year after birth." (Manu, ii. 35.)

PERHAPS nothing impresses a stranger in India so much as the peculiar manner in which the Hindu treats his hair. He sees some with a clean shaven head, except a top knot of greater or less size and length, whilst others have portions only of the scalp shaven, leaving fantastic locks of varying size and shape. On the other hand, some few are to be seen with the head covered with long, thick, tangled hair that seems as though it had not been interfered with in any way, either from the tonsorial or the toilet point of view, since the hour of birth. If the ordinary Hindu were accosted and questioned on his own tonsorial peculiarity, he would probably have no reason whatever to give for it, except the universal answer to such questions that it is the custom of his caste. He would, perhaps, treat as ridiculous any catechizing on such matters—the custom exists and therefore it is followed.

The Sanskrit name of this top-knot is sikha, and by that name it is known amongst the upper classes of all Hindus whatever their vernacular. In Tamil it is called cudimi, in Telugu zuttu. It is a curious circumstance, and one suggestive of further study, that whilst

the tonsure of the Roman Catholic Priest—the first ceremony in dedicating a person to the priesthood—consists of shaving a circle on the crown of the head, the Hindu tonsure—one of the chief ceremonies in the upanayanam, or investiture with sacred powers—consists of removing all the hair except a circular portion situated on the same part of the head.

Although the sikha is so important that without it a Brahmin is not a Brahmin, the tonsure and the investiture with the yagnópavítam being the chief elements in the upanayanam or spiritual birth of the twice born, there seems to be but very slight foundation for so complicated a superstructure. Learned Shástris seem to be unable to give anything on the point from the Vedas, except the mantram to be quoted later on, and the allusions to the same in Manava Dharma Sástra. The ceremonies appear to have gradually grown with the growth of the rest of the Hindu ritual. The first notice of them that appears in the Laws of Manu is the following:—

"By oblations to fire during the mother's pregnancy, by holy rites on the birth of the child, by the tonsure of his head with a lock of hair left on it, by the ligation of the sacrificial cord are the birth taints of the three classes wholly removed." (ii. 27.)

Hair ceremonies commence before the birth of a child as, for some six months before that event, the father abstains altogether from shaving until the eleventh day of the child's birth. Doubtless this ceremony is set aside in many instances in the present day of compromises, especially in the case of Government and other officials who would not think it respectful to appear before their superiors with a beard of such a growth. By orthodox Hindus, however, and especially by those in rural parts, this custom is still strictly followed. In the laws of Manu it is thus written:—

"By the command of the Veda the ceremony of tonsure should be legally performed by the three first classes in the first or third year after the birth." (ii. 35.)

This command, still strictly carried into effect, is now usually observed at the third year instead of the first. There are instances where, in the event of either of the parents making a vow to that effect, the hair of a boy is not cut at all until the upanayanam ceremony. Suppose the infant were taken ill, or misfortune were to happen to him, a vow might be made to a certain god that the first hair-cutting of the child should take place at the shrine of the god invoked.

The ceremony of the first performance of the tonsure (chaulam) is as follows. Hitherto the boy's hair has been allowed to grow like that of a girl, and the fond mother has been wont to cherish it and ornament it, in the same way, with plaitings and jewels; but now the uncut locks must be sacrificed to the inexorable laws of the Hindu religion. On a propitious day, previously fixed upon by the puróhita, musicians are called and a feast is prepared for friends and relatives. The first three cuts with the scissors must be made by the mother's brother or, failing such a relative, by the next nearest of kin on the mother's side. After these first three cuts have been made, the boy is handed over to the family barber, who clips off all the hair except a small portion on the top of the head. Some time after this clipping, perhaps a month after, the head is shaved for the first time. When the head is thus shaved, various fashions are adopted according to varying ideas of beauty. Sometimes separate locks are left over the temples and at the back of the ears; these are called kakapaksham or crow's wings. Sometimes, the hair is allowed to grow all round the head, whilst the whole of the top is clean shaven. The head is shaven, as a rule, about once a month.

If for any cause whatever, the boy's mother has made a vow to a certain god, it is the rule for this cutting of the hair to be made at the shrine of the god invoked. A pilgrimage is arranged to the place

and there the ceremony is performed. If, for financial or other reasons, it is not convenient to make such a pilgrimage at the time when it is imperative to perform the ceremony, then the shaving takes place at home; but a small tuft is left near the sikha, to be removed at the shrine when opportunity for a pilgrimage occurs. Sometimes the hair that has been clipped off is preserved, and tied up in a cloth to the rafters of the house until a pilgrimage can be arranged. This is the only occasion upon which the hair is allowed to remain in the house, for cut hair is always considered impure. When opportunity offers, the hair is then taken to the shrine and thrown into the sacred tank of the temple, or delivered to the officiating priest for disposal. The god Venkateshvara at Tirupati is a favourite one in South India for such vows. This god also has a shrine at Dváraka Tirumala, near Ellore in the Kistna District, which is for all practical purposes held to be as holy as Tirupati.

The real sacred tonsure is not performed until what may be called the religious coming of age. This varies according to caste. The following is the law laid down on the subject:—

"In the eighth year from the conception of a Brahmin, in the eleventh from that of a Kshatriya, and in the twelfth from that of a Vaisya, let the father invest the child with the marks of his class." (Manu, ii. 36.)

These marks of the class consit of the yagnópavítam, the mark on the forehead, and the sikha or sacred top-knot. At this important ceremony the head is shaven in the presence of the family, whilst the family priest chants mantrams, and musicians play on their instruments without. The top-knot and four small spots surrounding it are left unshaven; the five places being called pancha sikha. The top-knot itself must be the size of the foot-print of a cow (gópádam); but, as there are cows and cows, this is rather an uncertain

measurement. This is the reason why such various sizes in the sikhas are seen; some being comparatively very small, whilst others are sufficiently large to cover a great part of the head, and, when untied, to flow down in a sweeping tail to below the waist.

The whole of this shaving ceremony is very interesting. Each family priest has a rubric telling him exactly what to do on such occasions. These rubrics were originally drawn up by Rishis or Sages, and their directions are strictly carried out. The shaving rite is administered just before the young man is invested with the sacred thread. The priest acts for the father who may be ignorant of the mantrams and ritual. The theory seems to be that the father administers these rites in the god's stead, and the priest acts for the father. The priest goes through the ceremony, the father following him, when he is able to repeat the words at all. As a kind of introductory sentence to the shaving rite the following sentence is repeated:—

येनावपदिति चत सृभिः। प्रतिमंत्रं प्रतिदिशं। प्रदक्षिणं प्रवपति॥

The meaning of this is very difficult to make out, but it means somewhat as follows:—

"He (Jagatjanakaha—the progenitor of the world) shaves, repeating the four mantrams commencing with the one that begins with the words yénâ vapat—uttering one at each of the four cardinal points, and making circumambulation (pradakshinam)."

The priest then instructs the father of the youth, who is being invested, to take stalks of the sacred grass (darbha) and to put one on each of the four sides of the youth's head, indicating the four cardinal points of the compass, and to cut each stalk with a razor, thus showing the barber where to leave the four patches in shaving the head. The priest also directs

the youth to turn to the four cardinal points, commencing from the east, and at each he repeats the following mantram, from which the whole of this ritual seems to have been elaborated:—

येनावपत्सविता क्षुरेण सोमस्य राज्ञो वरुणस्य विद्वान् ।
तेन ब्रह्माणोवपतेदमस्यायुष्मान् जरदष्टिर्यथासत् ॥

"The all-wise progenitor of all things, with what razor he shaved the Moon and Varuna with the same he shaved Brahma. He also shaves the head of this youth. May he have long life and may his ignorance perish."

A short time after the upanayanam, another ceremony is performed with reference to the hair; this time in a temple. The former one was done in the house. At this second ceremony, the four spots that were left unshorn around the sikha are now shaven clean off, and no hair is left on the head except the top-knot itself. I have enquired of learned Pandits as to what would happen if, through baldness, or by the effects of any disease or accident, a man were to lose his sikha. It appears that, in such a case, the absence of the hair would not necessarily disqualify him from performing the sacred offices.

A custom has grown up that appears to be generally followed, though it is said to be against the strict letter of the law, for boys to allow the side patches (kákapaksham), to grow again after they have been shaven off. These beauty patches, however, can only be worn during the lifetime of the boy's parents; So upon the death of either parent he must remove all except the sikha. When, however, for his own soul's benefit he adopts religious observances, such as prayers and sacrifices to fire and the sun (hómam and súryanamaskáram), he must shave off all hair, except the sikha.

There is a passage in Manu which alludes to a custom now apparently extinct. I can find no trace of

it, though it may possibly be in vogue in some other parts of India. The passage is as follows:—

"The ceremony of cesánta, or cutting off the hair, is ordained for the priest in the sixteenth year from conception; for the soldier, in the twenty-second; for a merchant, two years later than that." (ii. 65.)

The Hindu, in South India at least, does not wear a beard, though it appears as if it were worn by some in other parts. Customs may differ in such widely distant places in this as in other respects. The Kulin and some other Brahmins of North India do not even wear the sikha. They crop their hair after the European fashion, but these must, by this fact alone, be disqualified from performing sacrificial and other rites and ceremonies.

When it is said that the Hindu does not wear a beard, we must except the Yógis or hermits who shave neither the head nor the face. In the chapter on devotion, Manu lays down the law as follows on this point:—

"When the father of a family perceives his muscles become flaccid and his hair gray, and sees the child of his child, let him then seek refuge in a forest.

Let him wear a black antelope's hide, or a vesture of bark; let him bathe evening and morning; let him suffer the hairs of his beard and his nails to grow continually." (vi. 2, 6.)

When a Hindu becomes a Sanyási, that is when he enters the fourth and last stage of the Hindu spiritual life, he, having then done with all sublunary affairs and even with religious rites and ceremonies, cuts off his sikha and all the hair from his face and head. Henceforth he goes quite bare.

"Having thus performed religious acts in a forest during the third portion of his life, let him become a Sanyási for the fourth portion of it, abandoning all sensual affections and wholly reposing in the Supreme Spirit.

His hair, nails and beard being clipped, bearing with him a dish, a staff and a water pot, his whole mind being fixed on god, let him wander about continually, without giving pain to animal or vegetable beings." (Manu, vi. 33, 52.)

The moustache is, as a rule, worn by the Hindus of every caste and nation except the priestly classes. The priest, of whatever caste he may be, even the dásari or pariah priest, must have his face clean shaven. In the chapter on the sacred marks, mention was made of the three great schools of philosophy into which Hindus are divided.[1] Those who belong to the Visishtádvaita school are strict worshippers of Vishnu. Men of this sect never wear the moustache, but are always clean shaven. They also abstain from smoking, although they may console themselves with snuff. The Smárthas who hold the Advaita doctrine, and who worship Siva in particular but reverence Vishnu; and the Madhvas who follow the Dvaita system, and who worship Vishnu in particular, but reverence Siva are both divided into two divisions of secular and priestly Brahmins. The Smárthas are Niyógis and Vaidíkis; and the Madhvas are Vyápáris and Achāryas. The Vaidíkis and the Achāryas are the priestly classes, and as such they should always have a face quite clean shaven. They, as well as the Rámánujas, must abstain from smoking. In these latter days, however, the Vaidíkis are far from strict in these matters; and many of them wear the moustache. They also, in very many cases, have abandoned the priestly office and follow the profession of the bar, or go into any of the various branches of the public service. For all of these occupations their hereditary connection with Vedic learning and general culture seems to particularly fit them. Therefore, if a Hindu is seen with a clean shaven face, it may, as a rule, be set down that he is

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[1] *Ante*, p. 74.

either a priest or a member of one of the priestly classes.

There is, however, an exception to this. Amongst Europeans the sign of mourning for deceased relatives is to wear black clothing; but amongst the Hindus, besides the absence of colour in the face mark,[1] the sign of mourning is to shave off the moustache.

At certain holy rivers there is a festival called pushkaram, held every twelve years, when those Hindus who have lost their fathers make a pilgrimage to the river, in order to perform ceremonies for their deceased ancestors. There are said to be twelve rivers in India that are thus honoured. The initial act in this ceremony is to shave the head and face quite clean but to leave the sikha untouched. Widows should attend these festivals and undergo the ordeal of shaving and bathing for the benefit of the soul of their departed husbands. The merit thus acquired is for the souls of the departed forefathers, or husband, as the case may be. At the time of shaving, the attendant priest repeats the following words of purification; the pilgrim repeating them after him, if able to do so:—

मेरुमंदरतुल्यानि । पापानि विविधानिच ।
केशनश्रित्य तिष्टंति । तस्मात् केशान् वपाम्यहं ॥

"Sins as huge as mounts Meru or Mandara,
Sins of various kinds,
These sins adhere to the hair of the head,
For these sins I undergo this shaving."

Sacred bathing in these holy rivers, accompanied by religious shaving, is also sometimes resorted to by a conscience-stricken sinner who seeks, by práyaschittam or expiatory rites, to be freed from the burden or penalty of his offences. If any one has been so very

[1] *Ante*, p. 80.

unfortunate as to kill a cow, even accidentally, or if he has upon his conscience some equally heavy burden, he must seek the advice of his spiritual director who may recommend a pilgrimage to some holy river. The distance may be very long, and the consequent trouble and inconvenience very great; still, under such circumstances, the penitent would probably attempt the task. On arriving at the place indicated, he will first seek the services of the local barber, and then plunge into the purifying stream to come forth, as he hopes and believes, with all his guilt cleansed away. At this religious shaving, the incantation must be said by the puskharam pilgrim. There is an analogy between these purificatory rites of shaving and bathing and those prescribed in the Old Testament for the purifying of the leper and for the purifying of the Levites. (Lev. xiv. 9; Num. viii. 7.) As a rule, a woman never parts with her hair, for a woman to be shorn is a sign of widowhood; but there are times when an exceedingly religious or loving woman may, in order to bring blessings upon her husband, part with a little of her cherished hair. When this is done it should he at the confluence of certain rivers; and there, with appropriate rites and ceremony, the wife may submit to her husband's cutting off a short length from her long hair, the severed portion being then offered to the river deity. At times of sickness, both men and women may vow to a certain god that, in the event of recovery, they will make a pilgrimage to its shrine and offer up their hair. When such a vow is upon a man, he will not shave at all but allow all his hair to grow, until he may be able to make the pilgrimage and carry into effect his vow. In fulfilment of such a vow the man or woman will go to the shrine of the god invoked and, with due ceremony, be clean shaven.

The rules connected with the act of shaving are strict and complicated. It is not right that any one

should shave himself. The law is thus laid down by Manu:—

> "The sun in the sign of Canyá, the smoke of a burning corpse, and a broken seat must be shunned; he must never cut his own hair and nails, nor ever tear his nails with his teeth." (iv. 69.)

It is easy to see how this restriction arose. Young boys cannot shave themselves and, even if they could, it would be a very clever boy indeed that could shave his own head, especially the back part of it. Here Hinduism steps in and stereotypes a custom, making it a religious observance. The shaving and the pairing of the nails should not be carried on in a room of a dwelling house, as hair and nail pairings are considered to cause pollution. These operations are always carried on in some open place, such as a verandah or shed; but more often in the open street. They are not done more than once or twice a month in the case of the commoner people, whilst once a week is perhaps the rule amongst the richer classes. In the towns, men in the higher ranks of society, shave the face even oftener than this, but not the head. In the Hindu village divisions there is a regular grant of land (in'ám) for the village barber, and any infringement of this grant leads to law-suits by the injured party. Curious to say there have been suits instituted by a village barber to restrain the inhabitants of his village from being shaved by any other than himself. A man cannot be shaved every day even if he were so inclined, as there are certain holy days and unlucky days upon which it must not be done. For instance, there can be no shaving on the day of the new moon (amávásya) and on the eleventh day after that, or on the day of full moon (pournami) and on the eleventh day from that, as these are holy days; or on Tuesdays and Saturdays, as these are unlucky days. As a man can only be shaved when he is fasting, the operation is generally done in the morning.

I have avoided dealing with the vexed question of the retention of the sikha by Christian converts. Discussions on this subject have occupied the attention of two well-known Indian Bishops and found them ranged upon opposite sides. Some hold that it is merely a national custom, no more connected with religion than everything else Hindu is, and so its retention or not is merely a matter of taste; others maintain that it is so intimately connected with pagan rites and ceremonies as to be distinctly heathen and demand its complete removal. Others again take a more moderate view, and, whilst they deprecate its retention by Christians as being to some extent a badge of Hinduism, would not imperatively demand its removal, trusting that as Christianity spreads, this also together with other customs will gradually die out.

CHAPTER VII.

HINDU MARRIAGES.

विवाह (Viváha).

"The nuptial ceremony is considered as the complete institution of women, ordained for them in the Veda, together with reference to their husbands." (Manu, ii. 67.)

Hindu laws and regulations on the marriage question take it for granted that all men and women must marry. It is only those who may be suffering from disqualifications of mind or body that do not marry. There are no old bachelors or old maids amongst the Hindus. The regulations and directions are all confined to the matter of how to choose, and how and when the marriage is to be performed.

It appears quite clear that in Vedic time there was some liberty of choice amongst both men and women, as to their partners; for it is thus written:—

"Three years let a damsel wait, though she be marriageable; but, after that term, let her choose for herself a bridegroom of equal rank.

If, not being given in marriage, she choose her bridegroom, neither she nor the youth chosen commit any offence.

But a damsel, thus electing her husband, shall not carry with her the ornaments which she received from her father, nor those given by her mother or brethren: if she carry them away, she commits theft." (Manu, ix. 90-92.)

But whatever liberty may have existed in this respect in ancient times, it is very certain that such is not

the case now. The institution of child marriage has entirely destroyed that liberty. Amongst Brahmins, and Vaisyas a boy cannot be married until he has been invested with the marks of the twice-born (upanayanam), though they are often married immediately after that event. Girls must be married before puberty and usually it is done whilst they are quite young. Other castes and non-castes may marry later on in life; still, even amongst them, the vows of matrimony are taken at a very early age. This necessity for marriage is often a great burden, as the choice is more or less limited. Marriages can only take place between those of the same caste and the same sect. There are also prohibitive degrees of tribe and family within which marriages are not allowed. Amongst the larger sects this does not act much as an obstacle, but amongst the smaller ones it often causes great difficulty. There are also natural likes and dislikes, some of which are thus alluded to by Manu, and which evidently point to a period when marriages were settled at a more natural age, and in a more natural manner:—

"Let him not marry a girl with reddish hair, nor with any deformed limb, nor one troubled with habitual sickness, nor one either with no hair or with too much, nor one immoderately talkative, nor one with inflamed eyes.

Let him choose for his wife a girl whose form has no defect, who has an agreeable name, who walks gracefully, like a phenicopteros, or like a young elephant, whose hair and teeth are moderate respectively in quality and in size, whose body has exquisite softness." (iii. 8, 80.)

The two institutions of polyandry and polygamy exist in India. The former cannot be said to be a Hindu institution; indeed it is utterly opposed and abhorrent to the very spirit of Hinduism. It is practised by such non-Hindus, or unorthodox Hindus, as the Todas of the Nilgiris, and the Nairs of the

Western Coast, but it is only a local and in no sense a universal custom. Polygamy, however, is a true Hindu institution, and it is duly legislated upon in the various codes. Manu lays down the law as follows :—

"For the first marriage of the twice-born classes, a woman of the same class is recommended; but for such as are impelled by inclination to marry again women in the direct order of the classes are to be preferred

A Sudra woman only must be the wife of a Sudra, she and a Vaisyá of a Vaisyá, these two and a Cshatriyá of a Cshatriyá, these two and a Brahmaní of a Brahman. (iii. 13, 14.)

This only alludes to a state of things in those early Vedic days; in this Kali Yuga or degenerate age, though a man may have, and in some cases should have, more wives than one at the same time, it can only be within strictly recognized caste limits. One of the stories in the "Vickramárkacharitra" turns upon the fact of a Brahmin being allowed to take to wife a woman from each of the four castes. Now, however, no one, especially a Brahmin, dares to marry outside of his own caste; but, within these limits, there are circumstances under which it is rather incumbent upon a Hindu than otherwise to take a second wife. Should his wife prove barren, or should all the male issue die, then, very often, the husband will be pressed by the wife herself to re-marry, so that there may be surviving male issue, and thus the reproach of the family be wiped away and the future salvation of those concerned fully assured. This concession is, however, guarded round with conditions, some of which are thus stated by Manu :—

"A barren wife may be superseded by another in the eighth year, she whose children are all dead in the tenth, she who brings forth only daughters in the eleventh, she who speaks unkindly, without delay." (ix. 81.)

Another condition, not absolutely binding in all cases, is that the first wife should consent to the

remarriage. It is not difficult to understand how reluctant a woman would naturally be thus to have a sharer in her husband's affection; and perhaps it is impossible for Europeans to understand her ever consenting to, much less wishing for, such a state of things. The desire, however, for male issue, indeed the absolute necessity for a son, either born or adopted, is so overpowering that it is not so unusual a thing as might at first be supposed, for a woman, at all and any risk to her own personal happiness or position in the family, to strongly desire her husband to seek out another suitable spouse and bring her to his home. Still, notwithstanding all this, it is comparatively an unusual thing for a Hindu, especially among the higher castes, to have more wives than one. Amongst the non-caste people we do now and then meet with cases where a man is living with more than one wife. It may be that one important deterrent to polygamy is the very great expense connected with an orthodox Hindu marriage. The cost is such that once in a lifetime is enough to hang a load of debt around the poor man's neck for the greater part of his natural existence.

Amongst nearly all Hindus there is a peculiar idea in the matter of degrees of relationships within which marriage is desirable, and amongst the Vaisyas the carrying out of this idea has become an imperative necessity; whilst most other castes think it so desirable as to be worth a great effort to carry it into effect. I allude to what is called amongst the Telugu people menarikam, which means that a youth should marry his mother's brother's daughter, and a girl should marry her father's sister's son. Failing such relationships the choice is left free, that is free within the proper limits of caste and sect. Much trouble is sometimes caused in the Christian Church by the hold this idea has upon the minds of the people, for sometimes

one of the parties thus eligible may be a Christian, and the other outside the pale of the church. There are, however, some sects of Brahmins who are opposed to this menarikam rule, thinking the blood-relationship too close for marriage.

There is another bar to marriages amongst Hindus that does not exist amongst Europeans, and that is that a younger brother cannot marry until the elder one is married. Neither can a younger sister marry before the elder one is disposed of. This is not a mere custom, it is according to what is strictly laid down in the code. Manu says:—

"He who makes a marriage contract with the connubial fire, whilst his elder brother continues unmarried, is called a parivetru; and the elder brother a parivitti. The parivetru, the parivitti, the damsel thus wedded, the giver of her in wedlock and fifthly, the performer of the nuptial sacrifice, all sink to a region of torment." (Manu, iii. 171, 172.)

I am now chiefly describing the customs of the Brahmins, who are more particular in ceremonies than other castes except, perhaps, the Vaisyas; but at the same time, though the inferior castes may leave out various items of the ritual, the mode of procedure is very much the same amongst all orthodox Hindus.

Many marriages are arranged, especially between near relatives, when the boy and girl are mere infants, perhaps within a few months of birth; but when that is not done, the parents begin to look around for a suitable person when the proper time for marriage is drawing near. In such a case, if the father of a marriageable boy hears or knows of a suitable match, he will select a fortunate day and then proceed to visit the parents of the girl with a view to preliminaries and to talk the matter over. He is always careful to take with him his son's horoscope, as the girl's friends will want to see whether the youth was born under such a combination of the planets as to augur well

for the future of the proposed pair. The horoscope is a document drawn up by the family priest at the birth of every boy, and sometimes of a girl, showing the date and even the moment of the birth, and the state of the planetary system at the time. This document is always carefully preserved for future reference. If the horoscope is favourable, preliminaries are talked over and financial arrangements made. Sometimes, particularly if the expectant bridegroom should be unpromising or old and a comparative stranger, the friends of the girl, on his sending a go-between, may try to drive a bargain and squeeze money out of him. No well-to-do father would care to give his daughter to such a man with the certainty of her soon becoming a widow; but a poor man might be tempted to do it for the sake of gain. Sometimes, when a rich old man loses his wife, the parents of a young girl will take means of intimating to him their willingness to give him their daughter for a consideration. This, however, is considered very improper, and is indeed against the letter of the law.

"Let no father who knows the law, receive a gratuity, however small, for giving his daughter to marriage; since the man who, through avarice, takes a gratuity for that purpose is a seller of his offspring." (Manu, iii. 51.)

Notwithstanding, it is not now uncommon for the bride's parents to demand a sum of money, sometimes comparatively large, from the boy's friends before they will consent to a match. This is very like selling the girl, and is the thing guarded against in the above quotation. The dowry given by the friends of the bridegroom to the bride, in the shape of jewels, which goes with the bride when she goes to her new home, is besides and over and above the money in question. The name given to the arrangements for this money gift to the girl's parent is one which means bargaining; and, when there are several applicants for her

hand, it often becomes very much like an auction in which the highest bid is held out for. I quote a case that is said to have recently happened in South India, which is, I am informed, only one of many that are of more or less frequent occurrence in one part or another. A certain poor Brahmin agreed to give his daughter, nine years of age, to the son of one of his own caste. The sum of money agreed upon in this case was Rs. 700 which was handed over to the girl's father, and the prathánam, or betrothal ceremony, actually took place. Within a couple of months, a more wealthy suitor appeared on the scene, and offered Rs. 1,000, which sum was duly paid over, and a second prathánam was performed. The matter came to the ears of the first party and he took legal steps to stay all proceedings, and obtained an injunction from the Law Court, pending the hearing of a suit. The case duly came before the Court, and it resulted in the girl's father having to refund the Rs. 700 to the first suitor for his daughter, besides paying the costs of the proceedings. After this the girl was finally married to the son of the one who gave the larger sum.

This unlawful custom of a father's receiving money in return for thus giving his daughter appears to prevail mostly amongst Brahmins. Ordinarily, amongst other Hindus, there is an interchange of gifts by way of dowry from the bride's father to the bridegroom, and from his father to the bride. These dowries usually take the shape of jewels, clothes, brass and copper household vessels and the like. The nature and value of these mutual gifts is all settled at the interview between the parents and friends before the prathánam. Jewels are also given to the bride by her father to be her sole property; and, in some cases, if a young wife dies without issue, these jewels are returned to him. There appears to be no definite rule

on this latter point, but it is a custom that is often complied with, and there is sometimes much bad feeling aroused when it is not done.

When a marriage is arranged between a young couple, and all preliminaries are settled to the satisfaction of the parties concerned, a suitable day is fixed upon for the prathánam, the formal engagement, or betrothal. The day fixed upon must be a lucky one, and it is not settled without consulting either an astrologer or the priest. At the pre-arranged time, the father of the boy with a friend or two, not the boy himself, proceeds to the house of the girl's father, who then calls together a few friends, and his priest. It is also the proper thing to have musicians at this entertainment. The boy's father then produces certain presents he has brought for the girl, such as jewels, cloths and a ring. These things are handed over to the girl in the presence of them all, and she is arrayed in all the finery. The ring, which is of a peculiar shape, is carefully kept all through life. It is put on the third or ring finger, and the elders present are called upon to bless the girl which they do saying, "may you like Lakshmi be happy and prosperous."

At the close of the ceremony, betel is distributed to the guests, and rose-water is sprinkled over them. After this, when, with the aid of the astrologer, a suitable day for the marriage has been fixed, the friends depart and the betrothal is complete. Like an 'engagement' amongst Europeans, this prathánam is not necessarily a binding ceremony; that is, it is possible, in the event of any obstacle arising, for this betrothal to be broken.

The time chosen for the actual performance of the marriage should be in one of the five months beginning from February. It is not that marriages cannot be performed at other times during the year, but this is considered the most propitious time. It is probable

that this idea took its rise from convenience, for, during the period in question, there is little agricultural labour to be done; and, as the crops also have been harvested, money is in hand for the expenses that must be incurred. At the time fixed upon, the bride's father has his house cleaned up and decorated, and a pandal, or large open booth, is erected in front and at the back of the house to accommodate the guests and friends. Permission must be obtained from the authorities to erect these pandals, and a tax is levied for the permission. The bridegroom's father sets out from his abode to go to that of the bride. He takes with him the bridegroom, a great part of his household, his own puróhita and other friends. It is made a great holiday and these visitors always have a band of musicians with them to cheer them on the journey. On approaching the home of the bride, the party array themselves in their best finery, the band strikes up and all await the coming out to meet them of the bride's parents and friends. Before going out to meet the party, the bride's father, if the parties are Brahmins, proceeds to the north-east of the village in search of some earth from the hillocks made by white ants. This he takes home and, having prepared a space in the room where the chief marriage ceremony is to be performed, he fills five earthen or metal vessels with it and places them in a row. In these vessels he plants nine different kinds of grain, and sprinkles them with milk and water, repeating a mantram. The grain thus treated quickly sprouts during the days of the ceremonies. Five of the gods are invoked and requested to be present as witnesses at the ceremony; namely Indra (the god of storms), Varuna (the god of the waters), Chandra (the moon), Yama (the god of death), and Brahma. This ceremony is confined to Brahmins. The saying of the mantram is a necessary part of the proceedings.

The mantram is:—

भूमिर्धेनुर्धरणी लोकधारिणी ॥

"The earth like the cow bears all things and supplies all things."

The bride's father and friends, with the family priest, go out in a body to meet the bridegroom and his party. When they meet there is a mutual exchange of civilities, such as gifts of betel, sprinkling one another with rose-water, and then rubbing upon the hands, neck and chest of each other some sandalwood paste. Finally, the guests are conducted to a lodging, previously prepared for them. This lodging must not be in the bride's house, for that would be considered very improper. The marriage ceremony may commence on the evening of the arrival of the bridegroom and the whole affair lasts for five days.

The hour for the ceremony of the actual marriage has to be carefully fixed so as to be at the most propitious time. It may fall during the day or the night time. A little before the time fixed upon, the party assembles in the apartment near the place where the grain is sprouting. The bridegroom is then duly bathed. This bathing is called blessed or fortunate bathing (mangalasnánam). After this, seated on a slightly raised platform, previously prepared for the occasion, dressed in his ceremonially pure clothes and facing the east, he prays to Ganésha (the god of obstacles) to be propitious. An image of Ganésha is placed there, if one can be procured; otherwise they place a lump of saffron made into a paste to represent him. After this he performs a ceremony of purification called punyáhávachanam. Meanwhile the bride in another part of the house, has been going through much the same kind of thing. She has been bathing, and worshipping Ganésha, and also Gauri the wife of Siva, or Lakshmi the wife of Vishnu. Which one it is depends on the religious sect of the parties.

The bride's parents now come forward and, with necessary ceremonies, invest the bridegroom with the two skeins necessary to form the full sacred thread of a married man. A curtain is then fixed up across the platform, and the bride is brought out seated in a kind of wicker-basket, and is then placed behind the curtain which separates the young couple, so that they cannot actually see each other until later on in the affair. The bride's father or mother then proceeds to give to the bridegroom a mixture of curds, milk, ghee, sugar, cummin, honey and other ingredients. This mixture is known as mathuparkam. A portion of it is placed in his hand and he proceeds to eat it. This is repeated three times. It is supposed to refresh him after the fatigue he has already gone through and also to prepare him for the further ceremonies. The bride's parents then present the bridegroom with a beautiful cloth and other like things, including a kind of yagnópavítam, made of one golden and two silver threads. The youth then proceeds to array himself in the gorgeous presents.

The important ceremony called kanyádánam (giving of the damsel) now takes place. This is done as follows. The bridegroom first makes the following declaration:—

> "I of such and such a name, family and tribe, perform this taking of hands for the remission of my sins and for the satisfaction of the supreme God."

The bride's family priest then asks the bridegroom if he is willing to take so and so to wife. On his answering in the affirmative, the ends of the upper garments of the pair are tied together in what is called the Brahma knot.[1] The priest in tying this knot says "vishvéth trátét," that is, "You both must trust and be a prop to each other." They sit thus

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[1] *Ante*, p. 67.

tied together until it may be necessary for them to move away from the place where they are sitting, when the knot is loosed. This tying of the cloths, is an important part of the marriage ceremony and is repeated at various stages of the proceedings. Certain presents of jewels and cloths, one of which should be of silk, are now given to the bride by the bridegroom's father. The bridegroom then again makes a declaration of his willingness to accept the bride, and her father makes a declaration of his willingness to give her. The bride's mother then brings in a vessel of water with which her father proceeds to wash the bridegroom's feet, sprinkling some of the water on his own head. He then takes the right hand of the bride, which is underneath the curtain, and placing it in the right hand of the bridegroom, pours over the clasped hands some water from the vessel. Whilst this is being done, the father with the help of his purôhita, repeats certain mantrams of which the following is a specimen:—

कन्यां कनकसम्पन्नाम् कनकाभरणैर्युताम् ।
दास्यामि विष्णवेम्यम् ब्रह्मलोकजिगीषया ॥

"This damsel laden with gold,
And adorned with jewels of gold,
I give to thee who art like unto Vishnu,
In the hope that I may attain the heaven of Brahma."

The pouring of water over the clasped hands is one of the most important ceremonies of the whole proceedings. After this is done, the curtain which has hitherto separated the bride and bridegroom is removed, and they see each other, possibly for the first time in their lives. The parties may be very young. Indeed, the bride must be young, and may be a mere infant of three or four years of age.

A very curious ceremony is gone through at this

stage of the proceedings. An ox-yoke is brought in, and a cord made of darbha grass is tied round the waist of the bride by the bridegroom. This cord is supposed to represent one of those used to place round the neck of the ox when it is yoked. It is easy to see the origin and significance of the act. The yoke is now held over the bride in such a manner that one of the holes in it shall come right over her head. The mangalasútram, to be presently described, is now taken and held under the hole through which water is poured by the bridegroom. The water trickles down the mangalasútram on to the bride's head. During this the young couple are made to say to each other "náti charámani," or "I will never leave thee."

The next ceremony is the important one of tying on the mangalasútram. This is a saffron coloured thread or cord to which a small gold ornament is attached. It is fastened round the neck and hangs down in front, like a locket. This is always worn by married women, like the wedding ring among Europeans, and it is never parted with, for any consideration whatever, until the death of either party. Thus, if a woman has not on the mangalasútram, it is a sign of widowhood.

A beautiful cloth is now given to the bride by her father and she departs for a little in order to array herself in it; on her return she is accompanied by her female relatives. The bridegroom now takes the mangalasútram and, with an appropriate declaration, ties it round the neck of the bride. Whilst this is being done, the musicians make loud noise with their instruments. Others who are present clap their hands. This is to prevent any sneezing from being heard. Sneezing is considered a very bad omen; and for fear any one might be seized with an attack during this important part of the marriage ceremony, the loud noise is made to drown so unlucky a sound. The declaration

which the bridegroom, prompted by the priest, gives utterance to on tying the cord is as follows:—

मांगल्यं तंतुनानेन मम जीवन हेतुना ।
कंठे बध्नामि सुभगे त्वं जीवशरदां शतम् ॥

"This mangalasútram
For the lengthening of my life,
Oh damsel! I tie to thy neck,
Do thou live for a hundred years."

Whilst the mangalasútram is being tied on,[1] the puróhitas and those present chant the mangaláshtakam, or eight marriage blessings. When the chanting is concluded, some of those present throw coloured rice upon the couple, by way of blessing them. One of the eight marriage blessings is as follows:—

जानक्याः कमलामलांजलिपुटे याः पद्मरागायिताः
न्यस्ता राघवमस्तकेचविलसत्कुंदप्रसूनायिताः ।
स्त्रस्ताःश्यामलकायकांतिकलिता या इंद्रनीलायिताः
मुक्ताःस्ताश्शुभद भवंतु भवतां श्रीरामवैवाहिकाः ॥

"The pearls in the lotus-like hands of Síta which shone like rubies
When poured on the head of Ráma appeared white like jasmine flowers,
And falling over his dark blue body shone like sapphires:
May those pearls thus used at the marriage of Ráma give happiness unto you."

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1 In the marriages of Indian Christians, this custom of tying the mangalasútram round the neck is retained. It is used instead of the marriage ring; and in the Christian marriage service when, according to the English rite, the bridegroom places the ring on the finger of the bride saying, "With this ring I thee wed," amongst Indian Christians he holds the cord round her neck saying, "With this mangalasútram I thee wed" and then, tying the cord in a firm knot, he leaves it there, never to be removed until the death of either party. If she becomes a widow, it is customary to leave off wearing the mangalasútram. This also is the custom amongst the Hindus generally.

An ornament called bháshikam is also worn by the bride and bridegroom, when they are seated together at any time during the five days for which the ceremony lasts. This ornament is usually made of twigs and coloured thread and is worn tied on to the forehead by a string passing round the head. After the tying of the mangalasútram, the priest places a few grains of coloured rice into the hands of those present, who in company chant as a blessing some verses from the Védas. After this, all present throw the rice on to the heads of the married pair. It may be that the modern English custom of throwing rice after a newly married couple arose from this Indian rite.

At this stage of the proceedings the bridegroom, duly prompted by the family priest, proceeds to perform a hómam or sacrifice of fire. This is done in the sacred fire which is made and kept up in the centre of a prepared place, during the whole of the marriage festival days. The hómam is performed by dropping into the fire certain kinds of twigs and rice and ghee. Mantrams are also repeated at the same time.

The next ceremony is called saptapadi or seven steps. This is the most important ceremony in the whole marriage rite, and in a court of justice this is the test ceremony by which it is decided whether a disputed marriage was completely performed or not. Manu also makes this the irrevocable act, upon which the rite is complete:—

> "The nuptial texts are a certain rule in regard to wedlock, and the bridal contract is known by the learned to be complete and irrevocable on the seventh step of the married pair, hand in hand, after those texts have been pronounced." (viii. 227.)

The ceremony is performed as follows. The couple, holding each other by the hand, walk three times round the sacred fire, each circle being supposed to be done in seven steps. Whilst they are thus marching

the puróhita repeats a mantram, the bridegroom joining in with him if he is able to do so. The mantram is supposed to be said by the bridegroom to the bride and is as follows:—

सखा सप्तपदा भव सखायौ सप्तदा बभूव ।
सख्यं ते गमेयं सख्यात्ते मा योषं ।
सख्यान्मे म योष्ठाः समयाव संकल्पावहै ॥

"By taking seven steps with me do thou become my friend,
By taking seven steps together we become friends.
I shall become thy friend,
I shall never give up thy friendship.
Do thou never give up my friendship:
Let us live together and take counsel one of another."

With this rite the marriage may be said to be indissolubly completed and, upon this, betel and fruit are distributed to those present, after which those who, through religious differences, cannot eat together with the household take their leave. The women present then sing marriage songs, which are taken from the marriage songs of Ráma and Síta. Whilst singing they hold in their hands small lamps, fed with ghee. The following is a specimen of these songs taken from the Telugu language.

THE LAMP HYMN TO RÁMA.

Refrain.—"Worship and blessing
Be unto thee, Ráma:
Own spouse to sweet Síta,
And giver of joy.

Thou lov'd one of Vasava,
Whose beauty is known.
Thou son of Kamsalya,
Who guardest thine own.
Worship and blessing, etc.

Made fragrant with sandal,
Rouged bright to behold,
Resplendent with garlands
And bracelets of gold.
Worship and blessing, etc.

With necklace of tulasi,
And ears set with gems,
With person in beauty
To rival the heavens.
Worship and blessing, etc.

Born unto Déviki,
Great in the skies,
Own guru to Cupid,
To thee our love flies.
Worship and blessing, etc.

With eyes like the lotus,
And face like the moon,
Thine eagle-drawn car
Is to thee for a throne.
Worship and blessing, etc.

Most glorious thy beauty
In Védas we sing.
By faithful and pure
Thou art served as a king.
Worship and blessing, etc.

Thou lord of mount Bhadra,
Whose praise is made known,
By singers like Rámdas,
The lotus-souled one.
Worship and blessing, etc.

Sometime after darkness has set in, the ceremony called sthálípákam is performed. This is done as follows. The company being assembled, a little rice is cooked in a small vessel on the sacred fire when, after several suppressions of the breath and repeating "Om bhuh, Om bhuvaha, Om suvaha" (the names of the three worlds of the Hindus), the bridegroom mentions the exact time that then is, naming the age, year,

day, and hour, and also the place where they are at the time. He then makes this declaration:—"I make this stháljpákam, on behalf of this damsel, in order to please the supreme God." After this is done, he sprinkles ghee over some of the cooked rice and, taking pinches of it up in his two fingers and thumb, performs a hómam by casting it upon the fire. He does this several times, repeating the following mantram:—

अग्नये स्वाहा अग्नय इदं न मम अग्नये स्विष्टकृते स्वाहा

अग्नयेस्विष्टकृत इदं न मम ॥

"May this become a sacrifice to Agni (the god of fire). To him this is given; it is not mine. May this become a sacrifice to him who fulfils our desires. This belongs to him; it is not mine."

Before the bride and bridegroom can take any food, the last ceremony of this first day's proceedings must be done. The puróhita takes them outside the house and, pointing out a very small star called arundhati, bids them pay homage to it. This star is near the middle one in the tail of Ursa Major and is named after Arundhati, the wife of Vasishtah one of the seven Rishis. It is not clear what is meant by this ceremony, but doubtless it had some meaning in olden times. This Arundhati is said to have been a pattern wife, and probably the ceremony is meant to draw the attention of the bride to that fact and to bid her follow so good an example.

After this the bride and bridegroom take food together, eating from the same leaf. This is rather a noteworthy act, as it is the only time during their life when the husband and wife eat together. Ever after they will eat apart. The duty of the wife is to serve her husband whilst he eats, and when he has done, to partake of what is left of the food, using as a plate the leaf from which her husband has just breakfasted, or dined. This unsocial custom is universal amongst

Hindus of every rank and caste. At the time when the bride and bridegroom are partaking of their "love feast," the family and guests sit down—the males and females apart—all duly bathed and prepared for food and partake of the marriage feast. Generally a very large number come together for this. The parents of the bride, however, do not sit down with their guests, but wait for their meal until all the feasting is over.

On the morning of the second day the bride is duly decorated and loaded with jewels, partly marriage gifts, but some probably borrowed for the occasion. Then seated in a marriage palanquin, and accompanied by dancing women and a band of music, she is taken in procession to the house where the bridegroom's father and friends lodge. The bridegroom then, all gorgeously arrayed, joins her and sits opposite to her in the palanquin. Then they are carried round in a grand procession back to the bride's house. On their return home from this procession, and also when they return from any of the processions, as they alight from the palanquin, their feet are washed by some attendants, and they are made to speak each other's name. This also is noteworthy, as it is not customary for husband and wife ever to mention each other's name, and it is amusing to see the various shifts that are resorted to in order to avoid doing so. Even in the case of a poor woman, if asked by one strange to the customs of the country what her husband's name is, instead of replying she will, with a titter, ask some one standing by, perhaps her own child, to mention it. Sometimes for fun, romping girls will tease a little wife to make her say her husband's name. They will shut her up in a room, or in some other way imprison her, and not let her out until she has mentioned what is usually so sacred and unmentionable.

This day is passed in singing marriage songs and feasting, with a few minor ceremonies. In the evening

there is again a grand procession, like that of the morning, except that they make a longer round and fireworks are let off at various places on the way. On arriving home, a hómam is performed, and the second day's affairs close with the usual feastings. The following is a specimen of the songs sung on such an occasion:—

A KRISHNA LULLABY.[1]

Refrain.—Come, let us sing sweet lullaby.

Come ye with eyes that twinkle bright,
And sing your sweetest lullaby.
The cradle swings with jewels set,
And there our baby Krishna lies.
Come, let us sing sweet lullaby.

To him who did in mercy save
Lost kari from fierce makari.
To him who ever happy is,
And rescues those who do believe,
Come, let us sing sweet lullaby.

To him who slew king Kamsa vile,
Who joy dispenses to the good.
To him who saved from evils great,
The parents whom he ever loved.
Come, let us sing sweet lullaby.

To Cupid's father, beauteous one,
Who stole the butter, Nanda's son,
To him who bears mount Mandara,
Loved Krishna, king of Késhava.
Come, let us sing sweet lullaby.

On the morning of the third day there is the usual procession, after which there is an elaborate ceremony called sadasyam or the meeting of the elders. During

[1] It is taken from the Telugu language. Kari is an elephant: makari a crocodile and the allusion is to the rescue by Krishna of an elephant from a crocodile. Nanda, a herdsman and foster-father of Krishna, slew Kamsa a demon King.

this ceremony presents are made of cloths and money to various people, and the forenoon closes with a grand feast. In the evening a very elaborate procession is made. The people first go to the bank of a river or some nice shady place, where carpets are spread. When all are seated, betel is served round and rose-water sprinkled on them. Then various games are played. All this being over, the procession again forms and, with much blazing of torches and burning of coloured lights, braying of horns and beating of drums, singing of dancing girls, and letting off of fireworks, it slowly makes a grand progress through the streets home again. It is not a pleasant thing to meet one of these marriage processions in the narrow streets of a village, or in the crowded parts of a bazaar, when returning home after dark from an evening ride. The blare of the trumpets, the din of the drums, the swishing rush and pistol-like report of the rockets, together with the glare of the torches and coloured lights, all combined form a scene that is enough to make any animal nervous that has not received the education of a trained charger. For my own part, I know I have often been thankful to get clear of such processions without accident to myself, or without any harm being done by the timid horse to any one of the surging, shouting, parti-coloured crowd that goes to make a Hindu holiday.

The fourth day is passed in the same way, except that one of the proper things to be done is for the bridegroom to pretend to be angry and sulky. He even goes so far as to start off in his palanquin to run away. The father of the bride then goes out to find him and tries to appease his anger, promising to give him presents of various kinds. He is supposed to take advantage of this to ask for various things as presents, a house for instance, or cattle, or money, or lands. The father-in-law then promises to give so

and so, upon which the youth shakes off his pretended sulks and returns to the festivities. This amusing and somewhat ridiculous farce seems to be a peculiar custom kept up as an opportunity for demanding and giving additional presents, by way of dowry to the bride. In the evening, after the usual feast, the most elaborate and prolonged of the various festal parades take place, with its accompaniments of torches, limelights, fireworks, singing of dancing girls and other festivities. Whilst the bride's home is partly deserted, the inmates being out with the procession, the friends of the bridegroom have some fun by going to the house and removing any useful thing they can lay their hands on; such as the ropes for drawing water and necessary culinary vessels. The consternation at the loss on the return of the procession is a source of much amusement.

Very early in the morning of the fifth day, say about three o'clock, the last hómam is performed (shésha hómam). The gods, who have been invoked to be present at the proceedings, are then solemnly dismissed to their several worlds. A mantram said upon this occasion is as follows:—

गच्छंतु देवाः यथासुखं ॥

"O ye gods depart in peace."

In the evening of this fifth and last day, a final ceremony is performed, called nákabali, or sacrifice to the inhabitants of heaven. The prepared place is again adorned and smeared with the dung of cows and a number of small lights, fed with ghee, are placed in a square formed of coloured pots. Several mantrams are repeated by the puróhita, in the presence of the assembled company, invoking the presence of the whole three hundred and thirty millions of gods of the Hindu pantheon. These are duly honoured and worshipped

by prayers and offerings of cooked rice. The bride and bridegroom are then tied together with the Brahma knot and marched three times round the burning lights by the priest, who meanwhile repeats certain mantrams.

Sometime, after the nákabali, there is more singing and music and betel is again distributed. Various bits of romping and fun are then indulged in. The bride and bridegroom are each seized upon by any two present, and carried about at a run; during this, white and coloured powders, and coloured water are freely thrown about, and there is a good deal of frolic and amusement.

The appaginta, or final delivering over, then takes place. This is always a most sorrowful proceeding, and the bride's mother, brothers, sisters and other relatives weep much, and in various ways express their grief as they give up their dear one into other hands. The ceremony is as follows. A dish of milk is brought in and the bride places her right hand in the milk; over her hand the bridegroom's father and mother and sister place their right hands, when the priest repeats some verses, of which the following is one:—

अष्टवर्षा भवेत्कन्या पुत्रवत्पालिता मया ।
इदानीं तव पुत्रस्य दत्ता स्नेहेन पाल्यताम् ॥

"This damsel has attained her eighth year,
She has been fostered by me like a son,
She is now given to thy son,
Protect her in love."

When this has proceeded far enough, a bundle of rice is tied to the waist of the bride, and she is once more seated in the palanquin opposite her husband. They then set out to go to the village of the bridegroom, thus bringing the prolonged and intricate ceremonial to a close.

The bride is supposed to stay for three days in her husband's house. She is then taken back to her own home, there to remain until she has attained a fit age to discharge the duties of a wife.

When the young wife has arrived at a suitable age, notification of the fact is sent to the husband's parents, and the occasion is celebrated by various feastings and festivities. The parents and friends on both sides consult as to a propitious time for the taking home of the bride. At the time fixed upon, the husband and his friends proceed to the bride's home where certain ceremonies and feastings take place. There is also much distributing of cloths, fruit, betel and other presents. After a few days thus spent, the bride is taken away by her husband to his own home, which she henceforth shares with him.

Sometimes in fulfilment of a vow the marriage takes place at some more or less celebrated place of pilgrimage. In that event, a pilgrimage is made by all concerned to the favoured shrine and the marriage takes place there. In such cases, all the ceremonies are crowded into one day, and some of lesser importance are omitted altogether.

In this description of the mode of procedure followed in the marriages of Hindus, I have not mentioned many customary rites and ceremonies of lesser importance, but I give an account of one. At some stage or other of the proceedings there is a peculiar ceremony, which is one of various minor ones. Some rice, which has been steeped in milk, is brought, and the bridegroom places a portion of this into the hand of the bride. Over this he sprinkles some drops of ghee, with a betel leaf, saying:—

पुण्यं वर्धत शांतिरस्तु ॥

"May righteousness increase! peace be unto you!"

He then takes some of the rice from her hand and

puts it on her head. She then takes some of it and puts it upon his head. This is done several times, after which they both do it at the same time, putting some of the rice upon each other's head.

In ancient days it was customary for the bride's father to present to the bridegroom a fatted calf, to be used for food at the marriage feast. In these days, however, this custom has given way and cloths and other things are presented.

Whilst the chief acts of ritual are the same amongst all Hindus, many minor ceremonies may differ much in different parts of this vast country, and amongst the different races and nations who profess the Brahminical religion. Some account of unorthodox marriages will be given in the next chapter.

It will easily be seen what an expensive affair such marriages are, and what large sums of money are thus squandered. There is no more fruitful source of debt, that curse of India, than the cost of these marriage customs and the wasteful expenditure incurred at funeral ceremonies. The presents of cloths, jewels and money; the feasting and feeding; the elaborate processions, and the necessary hiring of bearers and musicians and dancing girls; together with the fireworks and lights,—all these things swallow up large sums of money and often the chief supply comes from the bags of the money-lenders. It is no matter if the parties concerned are poor, the laws of custom are so inexorable that their demands must be complied with, even though by so doing a millstone of debts is hung around the neck to be a drag and a burden all through life. Many of the wiser people groan under these and similar bonds and occasionally a feeble voice is raised up in protest; but the Hindu is so conservative and so wanting in firmness of mind that there is not much hope of a radical change in such matters for many long years to come.



BRIDE AND BRIDEGROOM.

CHAPTER VIII.

UNORTHODOX HINDU MARRIAGES.

अधर्मविवाह (Adharmavivāham).

"From the blameless nuptial rites of men spring a blameless progeny; from the reprehensible, a reprehensible offspring; let mankind, therefore, studiously avoid the culpable forms of marriage." (Manu iii. 42.)

In the preceding chapter, the marriage rites and customs of the ordinary orthodox Hindus, and especially of the Brahmins, have been described with some detail. The Brahmanical rites may, to a certain extent, be taken as representing those of most orthodox Hindus. The details differ in different castes, and especially amongst the various and multifarious divisions of what are included under the name of Sudras, but there is a general resemblance in the main points of importance. There are, however, a vast number of people who, though nominally Hindus, do not strictly follow the rules and regulations of the Brahmanical religion. This fact is manifest, in more than any other way, in the rites and ceremonies connected with marriage. To some extent these people have, in the course of long centuries, become absorbed into the elastic fold of Hinduism using that word in its widest meaning. Strictly speaking, however, in a large number of cases, whilst nominal Hindus, they are really mere demon worshippers or something very akin thereto. In giving some description of these

unorthodox marriages, I take something that stands, as it were, midway between the Brahmanical or orthodox ceremonies, and those which are almost if not entirely foreign to them. As representing those that stand midway between the two we may take the Mála weddings as fairly representative.

The name Mála is a Telugu one for Pariahs. The Málas of the Telugu country do not appear to be so low in the scale of actual society as the Pariahs of the more southern parts of India, and they form a large percentage of the people. It is true, they are outcastes who cannot, strictly speaking, take a place in the caste system at all; but they worship, after their own fashion, Hindu deities, and seem to adopt Hindu prejudices, more and more, as they rise in the world through that industry for which they are noted. Most of this class are connected with agriculture, either as farm labourers or small farmers. Many of them, especially in the irrigated section of the country, own fairly large farms and are tolerably well off. It will be seen in the following details of their marriage rites and ceremonies, how many things there are which are evidently in imitation of the true Brahmanical rites, and also wherein they essentially differ.

When a marriage has been agreed upon amongst the Málas, the father of the youth, accompanied by several of the head men of the village, proceeds to the maiden's abode. This may be in the same hamlet, or in one at some greater or less distance. A consultation is then held between the friends of both parties as to the value of mutual presents, and, if all is agreed upon, the youth's father produces a rupee, to which the maiden's father adds half a rupee. This money is at once expended in drinks for the friends at a neighbouring drinking-shop, after which a feast is given by the bride's people. At this time the girl's people fix upon a day when they will visit the young man's

home. At the time agreed upon, the young lady's father and friends proceed to the youth's home, where there is more drinking and feasting. Upon this occasion, a fortunate period having been duly fixed upon, the day for the wedding is definitely settled.

The next thing is the prathánam, or formal betrothal. This often takes place on the same day as the wedding proper, especially if the parties all belong to the same village. The youth does not appear upon this occasion, and the maiden sits quietly in the house; the prathánam takes place at the bride's house. The elders and friends of both sides sit in opposite groups, when the young man's father hands over the jewels, cloths, and various other things which he has promised as presents to the bride and to her people. The friends on both sides then formally express their willingness to give and receive the bride or bridegroom, as the case may be. When this has been done, a skein of thread, adorned with saffron to represent the mangalasútram cord, is produced, and round it is entwined a cloth brought by the bridegroom's people, or failing that, the turban or head-cloth of the head man of the youth's village. This is then taken hold of by the elders from both sides and is carried to the place where the maiden is seated in the house. It is then carefully placed round her neck. This constitutes the prathánam.

The marriage itself takes place at the young man's house. As a rule, the ceremony is performed at night. Should it take place in the day-time, a young bull must be given by the youth's people, which, after being branded, is set free to wander about at its own sweet will, and to be ever after considered as a divine being. This, however, is only done by comparatively wealthy people, as a bit of ostentatious display. The dásari, or Mála priest, must be present on this occasion, and also a band of musicians. There will always

be a large concourse of friends and relatives. Probably in imitation of the Brahmanical ceremony described in the previous chapter, a place is prepared in the house on the western side near the wall, upon which a number of earthen pots duly adorned with various colours, and called in Telugu arivéni or airéni, are placed. These usually number eleven or thirteen, two of which should be very large. Brahmins do not use the arivéni; but they are always used at the marriages of Súdras and in some cases of Vaisyas and so called Kshatriyas. A skein of yellow thread is wound round the mouth or opening of the pots. In front of these various lamps are put, which must be kept alight for five days. In front of the lamps earth, which has been fetched from the tank and in which nine kinds of grain have been mixed, is scattered about. This earth is called in Telugu panta bangáram, or golden produce, and it is brought from the tank, with much ceremony, by five women, accompanied by a band of music. A cloth is held up over them as a canopy.

In front of the house door, a pandal or temporary shed is erected, underneath which a small star-shaped mound of earth is prepared, and adorned with coloured pigments. This is called in Telugu pendli arugu, or the marriage mound, and it is kept adorned for some time until it is washed away by the rains, or in some other way disappears. By the side of this are placed four low stools, and the bride and bridegroom are brought forward and seated upon two of them, the other two being occupied by a female relative of the bride and a boy relative of the youth. All sit facing towards the east. The priest then proceeds to tie on the forehead of each of the pair the ornament called básikam, already mentioned in the previous chapter as being made of sticks and coloured thread.[1] That on the youth is triangular in shape, whilst that on the maiden

[1] *Ante*, p. 108.

is oblong. These are worn during the whole of the marriage ceremony at any time when the rites are being performed. The nails of the hands and feet of the bride and bridegroom are then paired by a barber, or by one of the musicians. After this coloured rice is applied to the forehead of the couple by some of those present. The pair are bathed and adorned with gay clothing, after which they return to the pandal where they are tied together with the Brahma knot already described.[1] They are then made to stand in front of the prepared place, when the Brahma knot is untied, and a cloth is held up between them as a temporary curtain so as to hide them from each other. A silver ring is now placed by one of the musicians on the second toe of each foot of the bride, and a small vessel containing rice is tied up in her cloth round her waist. After this each one of the couple places the right foot upon that of the other. The cloth screen is now held horizontally between the pair, and over this they place their hands into which the priest pours rice made yellow with saffron. The priest now ties a green leaf, which has been rolled up, to the wrist of the bridegroom as a temporary bracelet. The bridegroom, then pouring the rice from his hands into the cloth, proceeds to tie a similar leaf to the wrist of the bride. These mock bracelets must stay on for several days. The mangalasútram is now brought forward with much ceremony, and the bridegroom ties it to the neck of the bride. During this operation the priest says a Sanscrit blessing to the following effect.[2]

THE DASARI'S BLESSING.

"We adore Brahma the eternal, invisible, immaculate, in whom are all perfections and who is the support of all the worlds.

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1 *Ante*, p. 67.

2 "The dásari, who told us this, was unable himself to give the meaning of the Sanskrit words used—he simply recited them without knowing their meaning."

They alone are pandits (learned men) who know him who is the eternal light to the three worlds, who is the creator, preserver and destroyer, the Omniscient God.

Worship Rámachendra who, born of the dynasty of the sun, is associated with Síta and Lakshmanna; who is served by Hanuman and others, whose whole nature is love, yea who is the very personification of love.

We adore Ráma who sits on the golden throne, who is worshipped by Brahma and others and who is the giver of all good things.

O supreme God! at what time any worship thy lotus-like feet: that, to them, is an auspicious time, that is a propitious star, that is a favourable lunar day, that is a lucky conjunction of planets.

(The priest) must repeat the eight nuptial blessings. He must repeat the proper mantrams at the feet-washing ceremony and when the mangalasútram is tied on, also when the hands are clasped and when the rice is poured on each others heads. When the Brahma knot is tied, then we must visit arundhathi.

Ye having worshipped the gods near the arivéni and having made obeisance unto them, peace be unto you."

After the tying of the mangalasútram, which constitutes the binding rite of the whole ceremony, the youth again takes up into his hands the rice which he had poured into the cloth. The bride holds hers in her hands all this time. He now pours his rice upon her head and she pours hers upon his. This rice is supposed to represent pearls. The screen cloth is now taken quite away and the cloths of the couple are again tied together in the Brahma knot. The friends who are present then scatter rice upon the heads of the pair. The bride's father brings forward a ring and a new loin cloth which the priest takes, proclaiming in a loud voice that the father has given these things to the bridegroom; the latter then puts the ring on his finger. The friends on either side now present to the pair the wedding presents they may have brought—money or cloths or ornaments or brass and copper vessels. It is considered the proper thing that presents of equal value to those thus

received should be returned to those who thus present them, and much-ill feeling arises when this is not done. After this, the fathers of both parties walk round the sacred place three times, each carrying one of the pots. When this is all over, the priest[1] takes the couple and shows to them the star arundhathi, to which they make obeisance. The young couple now join hands, the bride groom hooking his left little finger into that of her right hand. Thus joined together they go to the house and stand in the doorway of the room in which are lights and coloured pots. Inside the room there are some female friends who sing for sometime. The newly-married pair give them a present of some money. They are then allowed to enter and stand before the arivéni pots and lights to which they do obeisance. I give two specimen songs translated from the Telugu language. The first is supposed to be a dialogue between the bridegroom, who is standing outside the house with his bride, and his sister who is inside. He wishes to enter the house and she refuses admittance, in order to extract from him the promise he at length gives. The song is sung antiphonally by two groups of the women. The shower of pearls and diamonds spoken of is an allusion to the pouring of rice by the couple over the head of each other after the tying of the mangalasútram.

UNBOLT THE CLOSED DOOR.

"The white pearly shower has now fallen;
Your sister is drenched to the skin.
Dear sister unbolt the closed door,
Why tarry, oh! please let us in.

The white pearly shower has not fallen;
Our sister's not drenched to the skin.
How can we unbolt the closed door?
'Tis now that our quarrel begins.

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[1] *Ante*, p. 111.

The shower of great diamonds has fallen,
Your sister is drenched to the skin.
Dear sister unbolt the closed door,
Why tarry, oh! please let us in.

No shower of great diamonds has fallen,
Our sister's not drenched to the skin.
How can we unbolt the closed door?
'Tis now that our quarrel begins.

The shower of rich gems has now fallen;
Your sister is drenched to the skin.
Dear sister unbolt the closed door;
Why tarry, oh! please let us in.

No shower of rich gems has now fallen,
Our sister's not drenched to the skin.
How can we unbolt the closed door?
'Tis now that our quarrel begins.

I'll give you a sheet and young heifer;
My daughter I'll give to your son.[1]
So sister unbolt the closed door;
Why tarry, oh! please let us in.

The bridal pair are now admitted into the house where they take up a position before the arivéni. Then all the women in concert sing some such song as following:—

THE ARIVÉNI SONG.

"Oh potter! Oh potter! go make arivéni,
We'll have a fine wedding at home.
Make clay arivéni and small ones of silver,
The time for the marriage has come.

The potter has kneaded the clay all so deftly,
With legs all so crooked they tell.
On Tuesday he chose it, on Friday he shaped it,
On Sunday he finished it well.

The potter's wife smiled so to see arivéni
In honour of Lakshmi thus made.
She took them and placed them with joy and with laughter,
To stand in the house in the shade.

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1 This is an allusion to the custom by which the bridegroom's sister asks for her son the hand in marriage of the bride's future daughter.

The priest he is witness that all is done rightly,
The Brahma knot sacred is tied;
And Cupid who clasped the two bracelets is witness,
That all is done well for the bride.

Why do we this worship to our arivéni ?
For sons to be born to this pair.
All these will be granted with wealth and contentment,
And joy with which naught can compare."

By this time it is daylight and the company all separate for some time, after which the newly-married couple and their friends, accompanied by the usual musicians make a procession through the village. A white cloth is held over the couple as a kind of canopy, and a supply of bétel is also distributed to friends on the way. If the couple are farm labourers, they will go to the house of their master and receive something by way of a wedding present. The procession is usually on foot, but sometimes the bridegroom will be on horseback with the bride sitting in front of him, if she happens to be a little girl; otherwise, if the people are well-to-do, she may be seated in a palanquin, or she may walk by the side of the horse. When the procession is finished, the couple worship the village goddess, usually represented by a rough stone image, placed under a tree or on the bank of a tank.

This procession is followed by a great feast given by the father of the bridegroom, and for which a pig is often slaughtered to form the wedding dish. After the feast, a game is sometimes played, in which the young couple are hoisted up on men's shoulders. They throw coloured powder at each other as they are danced around. This is called dégáta or the hawking game. On the fifth day the temporary bracelets are taken off with some few ceremonies, and the bride goes on a visit to her mother's house. One of the ceremonies, on the taking off of the bracelets, is for the head man of the village to place some boiled rice in the

bride's hands, when she, standing before her husband, says, "In trouble and in joy I will always cleave to thee and will never leave thee." She then places the rice in his hands and he says similar words.

The marriages of the Mádigas, or skinners and tanners, are performed in much the same way, only there is usually more spirit drinking than is the case with the Málas, and consequently there is more brawling and noise.

For the nuptial ceremonies of the non-orthodox tribes, which will now be described, I am indebted to the Government Manuals of the Nellore, Madura, and Nilgiri Districts, reference to which will afford much interesting information concerning the various tribes in question.

The marriage rite of the Yeruklas is said to be of a very simple character. These are a tribe of wandering gypsy-kind of people, whose temporary huts may be seen on the outskirts of villages throughout the country. They are said to practise polygamy, and the marriage ceremony usually takes place on a Sunday. Various kinds of worship are performed on the previous day, but on the Sunday fixed upon, rice mixed with turmeric is poured on the heads of the couple and the mangalasútram is tied round the neck of the bride. This simple ceremony completes the marriage.

Amongst the Yanadies, another migratory aboriginal tribe who gain their livelihood chiefly by hunting, and making and selling mats and leaf-plates, and gathering and selling firewood and other jungle produce, the marriage seems to be based on the consent of the parties themselves. The man and woman arrange the matter between themselves, and afterwards at a gathering of friends bétel is distributed, the mangalasútram is tied on, and the woman is taken to her husband's house.

Hitherto I have been speaking of things as they are in the Telugu country. Farther south, in the Tamil speaking parts, there are many varieties of the marriage rites amongst the various aboriginal tribes.

The Kárakat Vellálans, for instance, who live on and near the Palni Mountains in South India, have very peculiar marriage customs. The ceremony is performed in a booth, erected for the purpose before the house door of the bride. The bride and bridegroom are seated on the floor with their faces towards the east. A lamp is kept burning on a stool near where they sit, whilst a measure of grain and a rude image of Ganésha made of cowdung, is placed near them. After both have prostrated themselves before the symbol, the bridegroom receives the mangalasútram from some of the relatives present, which he proceeds to tie round the bride's neck. At the same time a bowl of milk is brought, in which a few leaves of the peepul tree have been steeped. The relatives on both sides then sprinkle some of this milk upon the heads of the pair. The newly-married couple then prostrate themselves before their several relatives, and the day's ceremony is concluded with a feast and a formal distribution of betel. This concludes the marriage ceremony. On the following day the bridegroom gives a grand feast, when various marriage presents are distributed to the bride and her relatives.

Amongst the Maravans, a people dwelling mostly in the extreme south-east of the peninsula, the marriage ceremonies are very strange and unusual. After a marriage has been agreed upon by the principal members of two families, a few of the relatives of the intended bridegroom go to the house of the bride, and then, with or without her consent and, even perhaps without having sought the consent of the bridegroom, they tie upon her neck the mangalasútram whilst conch shells are blown loudly outside. They then

escort the bride to the house of her husband. A feast is given which lasts for several days. Processions are formed through the streets and a cocoanut is broken before an image of Ganésha. These and a few other ceremonies conclude the marriage rites. There is one curious custom which must be noted when these people have not the means to pay for the feast and other expenses. They simply tie on the mangalasútram, upon which the parties live together as man and wife. The other ceremonies, however, must be gone through at some time or other, when means admit of it. Should the husband happen to die before the defect has been supplied, the friends and relatives at once borrow money, if they have none by them, and proceed to complete the marriage ceremonies in the presence and on behalf of the corpse. The dead body supposed to be the bridegroom is placed on a seat with the woman by it. After this gruesome ceremony, the mangalasútram is taken off the woman and she is free, as a widow, to remarry.

Amongst the Kallans, an important caste in the south, a marriage alliance depends upon consanguinity, and it is entirely irrespective of the wishes of either parties to the contract, or even of their parents. When a wedding has been fixed upon, the sister of the bridegroom, with a present in her hand, goes to the house of the parents of the bride and ties some horse-hair round the bride's neck. She then takes her, accompanied by some of her relatives, to the house of the bridegroom where a feast is prepared. After the feast the pair are conducted to the house of the bridegroom where a solemn exchange is made of vallari thadis or boomerangs. Another feast is then given in the bride's house, and the bride is presented by her parents with some rice and a hen. The bride and bridegroom, now husband and wife, then repair to his home and the marriage ceremony is complete.

There is a caste of cultivators in the south called Tottiyans, who perform their weddings as follows. Two booths are erected, outside the limits of the village, and in each of them is placed a bullock-saddle, and upon these are seated the bride and bridegroom, whilst the relatives and friends congregate around. The attendant priest addresses the assembly, after which the price of the bride, usually so much grain, is carried under a canopy of white cloth to the house of the bride's father. This procession, which is heralded by music and dancing, is met by the friends of the bride, who receive the grain, and they all go together into the house. Here betel is distributed and mutual congratulations exchanged, after which the whole party is led to the bride's booth by the priest. Arrived there, the priest receives at the hand of the bridegroom a small chain of black beads and a tiny circlet of gold. The priest then proceeds to tie the chain round the bride's neck and attaches the circlet of gold to her forehead, with which ceremony the marriage is complete. This is succeeded by the usual feasting, without which it does not seem possible for a marriage to take place anywhere.

There are people of a very low status like the Poleiyans, for instance, whose marriage ceremony merely consists of a declaration of consent made by both parties at a feast to which all the relatives are invited.

I now proceed to describe the nuptial rites of the hill tribes of Southern India which are of the most simple and primitive character.[1]

Amongst the Tódas early betrothals are common, and the agreement is ratified by an interchange of buffaloes. When the time comes for the marriage to be consummated there is another exchange of buffaloes.

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[1] This account of Tóda, Kota, Kúramba, Irula and Badaga ceremonies is taken from the "Nilgiri Manual," compiled by the late Mr. Grigg, I.C.S.

The only ceremony is that the woman bows down before the man and he places his foot upon her head. This humiliating acknowledgment of submission on the part of the woman is not what one would have expected in a tribe where polyandry is practised. The wife is installed in her position by proceeding to perform some household duties, such as cooking and drawing water.

The Kótas, a tribe dwelling on the slopes of the Nilgiri Hills, perform their marriages in the following manner. It is usual for the couple to be betrothed when they are quite young and, when the girl becomes of a marriageable age, she is sent for to the house of her future father-in-law. The usual marriage feast is given, followed by music and dancing, and the ceremony is concluded by the bridegroom's mother tying the mangalasútram round the bride's neck.

Amongst the Kúrambas, who are also dwellers on the Nilgiri slopes, there seem to be no marriage rites whatever. When a couple decide to come together, or even after they may have been living together for some time, a feast is given to their friends and the marriage is complete.

With the Irulas, another Nilgiri tribe, there is no marriage ceremony, neither is there any previous betrothal. When a youth comes of age to choose a wife, he finds one for himself and the matter is ended.

The Badagas, who are dwellers on the Nilgiri plateau, are said to be the descendants of Canarese colonists. Amongst this people marriages are contracted without any special rites and the marriage tie is held by them very loosely. After a couple have agreed to come together, a time of probation is allowed during which either of the parties may draw back and decline to go on further with the connection. A man may make several of these temporary alliances before he definitely decides upon a partner for life. There is some feasting

when a definite alliance has been agreed to, and that is all there is by way of rites and ceremonies.

Nothing has been said in this chapter of the polyandry and polygamy which exist as institutions amongst some tribes and nations of India; nor have I touched upon the question of divorce which, though unknown amongst orthodox Hindus, is freely practised amongst some castes and tribes.

CHAPTER IX.

HINDU DIET.

आहार. (Áhára).

"For the sustenance of the vital spirit, Brahma created all this animal and vegetable system; and all that is moveable and immoveable, that spirit devours." (Manu, v. 28.)

IN the second chapter I gave a brief description of a Brahmin family at dinner,[1] but said nothing about the composition of the various dishes which usually form the bill of fare. The Institutes of Manu, clearly show that, with various restrictions, there was, practically, as much freedom in the choice of food to the good Hindu of those days as there is to men of the most civilized nations in these modern times. In the fifth chapter of the Institutes, the ancient law-giver mentions various kinds of vegetables and animals that may not lawfully be eaten; but these dietary rules are very much on a line with those laid down for the Jewish nation in the book of Leviticus, and the wisdom of many of them, from a sanitary and economic point of view, is very apparent to the dweller in Eastern lands. It is easy to see why "mushrooms and all vegetables raised in dung" are excluded from the dietary; and why in a hot reeking climate "garlic, onions, and leeks" are not recommended. Again, to the Eastern traveller there is no question as to the

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[1] *Ante*, pp. 38-42.

positive wisdom of the rule forbidding the eating of the flesh of birds and beasts of prey, and of such vile feeders as the village hog. Even, however, in the laws of Manu, the permissions and restrictions are of a somewhat conflicting nature; and, as is the case with so much that is connected with Hinduism, they present to the eye of the uninitiated manifest contradictions. Nothing can be more free and general than the passage quoted at the head of this chapter. We find, also the following statements:—

"Things fixed are eaten by creatures with locomotion; toothless animals, by animals with teeth; those without hands, by those to whom hands were given; and the timid by the bold." (v. 29.)

"He who eats according to law commits no sin, even though every day he tastes the flesh of such animals as may lawfully be tasted; since animals which may be eaten and those who eat them are both created by Brahma.

No sin is committed by him who, having honoured the deities and the manes, eats flesh-meat which he has bought, or which he has himself acquired, or which has been given him by another." (v. 30, 32.)

The restriction here is not greater than in the case of ordinary Muhammadan customs, but, further on, we find enactments which seem entirely to do away with this freedom. A general principle is laid down, and a hard and fast deduction drawn from it as follows:—

"He who injures no animated creature shall attain, without hardship, whatever he thinks of, whatever he strives for, whatever he fixes his mind on.

Flesh-meat cannot be procured without injury to animals, and the slaughter of animals obstructs the path to beatitude; from flesh-meat therefore let man abstain." (v. 47, 48.)

On the whole, whilst there appears to have been great freedom in the matter in those far-off times, even the Institutes themselves show a decided leaning to the merit of abstaining from animal food. In

course of time, these ideas have become so crystallized as to make it an absolute matter of religion to rigorously abstain from the slightest approach to eating anything even containing the germ of animal life. I remember a simple thing that occurred many years ago, soon after my arrival in India, which very much impressed this upon my mind. A Brahmin visitor in taking a cursory look round upon things in general, was struck with the nice appearance of some salt in the salt-cellar on the table. He had only known salt in its dark dirty appearance, as it is seen exposed for sale in the bazaar. He seemed much interested when told that our table salt was nothing but the ordinary native salt clarified, and he expressed a great desire to know the process. When he was told that the white of egg was an ingredient in the clarifying operation his countenance fell. Nothing so closely allied to animal life as that which had to do with a fowl's egg could be eaten by a Brahmin. At the present day, all the higher classes abstain from animal food in every form and are rigid vegetarians. The lower classes are not so restricted in their diet; indeed, as we go lower down in the scale of caste we find the restrictions lessen, and the dietary scale expand, until it comes to include things considered by even the least fastidious of Europeans as altogether abominable. Animal food is largely consumed by the lowest classes, when they can get it, in any shape or form; but even in their case, it is a question whether without it they could not equally well endure the physical strain of labour, if they could afford to procure the good vegetable food of their betters. It is, perhaps, hardly possible for the European to at all understand the loathing and disgust with which a high caste Hindu looks upon the eating of animal food. Added to this state of feeling in an intensified form, there is also the religious element, which makes it a crime of the

deepest dye, in some cases even an unpardonable sin, to partake of such food. Habit, religion, national training which has become an instinct, together with climatic requirements, all point to the wisdom of the vegetarian diet of the Hindu; and anything ought to be looked upon with disfavour which tends to alter the same for what may perhaps be a necessity in colder climes. There are, it is said, some tribes of Brahmins who may eat fish; and I know that many of the manifold divisions of the fourth caste eat fish, mutton or goat's flesh freely. There is amongst all classes, the lowest outcasts excepted, the greatest repugnance to eating the flesh of cows or oxen. No doubt, what is now a deeply rooted idea was originally a merely economic one, arising out of the exigencies of the people; but, in true accordance with Hindu things generally, what first arose as a necessary custom became petrified into a religious law—a law, the wisdom of which it is not difficult to see, and for the breach of which there does not seem in India any necessity. Sir Monier Williams says;—

> "Happily for the Hindus, the cow which supplies them with their only animal food—milk and butter—and the ox which helps to till their ground were declared sacred at an early period. Had it not been so, this useful animal might have been exterminated in times of famine. What is now a superstition had its origin, like some other superstitions, in a wise forethought."[1]

At first sight it may seem to the stranger that the dinner table of the high caste Hindu is dreadfully lacking in variety and quality. There are no steaming joints, nor any of the infinite variety of roast and boiled and stewed and fried that go to make up the daily fare of the well-to-do European. To those, who have some intimate knowledge of the daily life of the Hindu gentleman, there seems little room for pity; for there

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[1] "Hinduism" (ed. S. P. C. K., London, 1877), p. 156.

is an infinite variety of pickles, chatneys and sauces—the sweet, the sour, the bitter and the pungent—which go to form the chief variety of excellent appetizers. These are prepared by the females, who set as much store on their recipes and take as much personal interest in the actual preparation of them, as our grandmothers in England did before the days of general providers. The secrets of the still-room enter as largely into the education of the Hindu girl, as they did in the olden days with our own forefathers. When females meet for a chat, the conversation is largely taken up with this all-important subject. This is natural, as the good opinion of the master of the household can be influenced by the dinner table in India as in other countries.

There are various kinds of dhál and also different modes of preparing it. This dish is a kind of pease-pudding made of various pulses, and it is used very much in the same way as rice is to form the medium for partaking of the different delicacies. In other parts, wheat and other kinds of grain are used instead of rice as the foundation article. Vegetables of many kinds, including the numerous gourds, go very largely to form the curry; and above all and without which everything else is as nothing, there is the highly prized ghee, or clarified butter. This article enters, more or less, into the preparation of almost every dish; and is employed freely according to the means of the family. After the meal, curds are poured over the rice and eaten with suitable pickles or chatneys just as pudding and sweets are in Europe. This dish is always the last one of the meal, and when cakes are eaten, of which there are a great variety, they are taken just before the dish of curds is introduced. In the preparation of these cakes and sweets of many kinds, the females pride themselves on their proficiency, and at festive seasons such things are largely in request.

The well-formed limbs and well-nourished body of the average Hindu gentleman show that the Hindu dietary, though wanting in what we may consider substantial dishes, is well suited for all those purposes for which food is a necessity. The Hindu law-giver, having in view the proneness of man's animal nature to over-indulgence, and also, perhaps, being personally acquainted with the highly spiced, appetizing dishes of the East, is careful to say:—

"Excessive eating is prejudicial to health, to fame, and to future bliss in heaven; it is injurious to virtue and odious among men; he must for these reasons, avoid it." (Manu, ii. 57.)

This description applies, primarily, to the higher castes and well-to-do Hindus; but, with a few changes, it is true of the habits of all respectable classes. The chief difference lies in the number and variety of the pickles and chatneys, and the manner in which they are prepared, and also in the fact that the Súdras partake of animal food. Even by these, however, particularly in the villages, animal food is not regularly eaten; the main reason being, as far as country folks are concerned, that it is not often procurable. There are no butchers' shops in the villages, and it is only occasionally, as at some festive season, that a sheep or goat is slaughtered for food. Fish is more used when procurable. Fowls and eggs are eaten oftener than meat; but even this is chiefly at the entertainment of friends. The Brahmins are noted for their good cooking; and this, as a rule, is done by the females of the household, not by servants. On important festive occasions, when the labour involved may be too heavy for the regular household, male cooks, friends or relatives give their help; or professional cooks are employed, care always being taken that the rules of caste are not infringed. Fruit is sometimes taken after meals as a dessert. Betel is usually taken after every meal to aid the digestion.

Hindus are water drinkers, but milk and buttermilk are freely drunk when procurable. A simple drink is also made of water sweetened with jaggery (sugar in its unrefined state) and flavoured with pepper; but this is more of a sacred drink and is not ordinarily used. The Panchamas or outcasts, and also some of the lower of the numerous classes of Súdras, largely drink intoxicants, chiefly toddy and country arrack. Amongst respectable Hindus the drinking of intoxicants of any kind is considered most degrading. Although there are a few, comparatively very few, and these chiefly the dwellers in towns and cities, who are becoming addicted to drinking habits, it may still be said that real Hindus are a nation of water drinkers. Here is a nation composed of men who have proved themselves capable of enduring great physical fatigue, who are clever, hard-working mechanics and laborious cultivators of the soil, and numbers of whom rank in the first class as learned pundits, brave warriors, and clever statesmen, and these men have for ages been a nation of water drinkers.

The higher classes of Hindus generally have only two meals a day, the midday meal, which may be taken earlier if circumstances necessitate it, as in the case of business men and officials who have to go to office, and the evening meal or supper. The supper is usually taken very late in the evening, shortly before retiring for the night. A good orthodox Hindu should take no food or drink of any kind before the midday meal; but, as a matter of fact, it is becoming a custom for a light breakfast to be taken earlier in the day. This is not, strictly speaking, in accordance with the Shástras, but the custom is tolerated. With the Súdras and the Panchamas it is an invariable rule to have a light breakfast in the early morning, when poverty does not prevent it. This meal usually consists of cold rice which has been purposely left over from the

supper of the previous evening. It is eaten just as it is, simply flavoured by a little salt; but, when it can be had, a morsel of broiled salt-fish, or a broiled chilly, or an onion or bit of cocoanut may be taken by way of relish. This cold rice is mixed up with a little butter-milk, or the cold conjee of the night before, that is, the water in which the rice has been boiled and which forms a kind of thin gruel.

When on a journey or otherwise away from home, the high caste Hindu has to undergo many inconveniences, and must often suffer much from the pangs of hunger; but even travellers have various ways and means of obtaining food. Hospitality is universal, and the traveller is always sure of ungrudging entertainment from those of his own caste, whose hospitality he may lawfully accept. This duty of entertaining guests is laid down by Manu, as of prime importance. In treating of the duties and obligations of house-keepers he says:—

"No guest must be dismissed in the evening by the house-keeper; he is sent by the retiring sun; and whether he come in fit season or unseasonably, he must not sojourn in the house without entertainment.

Let not himself eat any delicate food, without asking his guest to partake of it; the satisfaction of a guest will assuredly bring the house-keeper wealth, reputation, long life, and a place in heaven." (iii. 105, 106.)

Connected with many of the choultries, or public lodging places, are means for providing meals for travellers according to their caste. In the towns and in most large villages there are houses of entertainment for different classes where food is given on payment. Certain kinds of food may be taken without undergoing the usual ceremonies. A broad division is made of things cooked in water, and those cooked dry, or with ghee or oil. "It is the water that makes the mischief," as a Brahmin friend said to me when

talking on the subject. Sweetmeats and certain kinds of cakes, and parched grain and rice broiled and cooked in ghee, and fruit may be eaten at any time and in company with other castes, without changing the dress, or bathing, or undergoing any other of the various ceremonies that have been already described.

The lowest classes or the outcasts are not troubled by any of the dietary rules which are so rigid in the case of the higher caste people. The members of the Súdra caste partake of animal food. Indeed, some of the lowest classes of that much-divided and subdivided caste eat almost anything and everything that comes in their way. The Yerukalas, for instance, a gipsy tribe who live by making wicker baskets and the like, will eat rats, cats, the village pig and almost anything they can get; and yet, strange to say, they are not looked upon as unclean in the same way as the Panchamas are considered to be. They are even allowed to draw water from the caste wells, a privilege that is denied the outcast, who must not even go near or look into a well that is used by caste people. The broad line of division that marks off the despised and hated Panchamas from others, is the fact that they eat carrion. The carcases and skins of all the cattle and other animals that die of disease or old age are the perquisite of the Panchamas, who consume the flesh and tan the skins into leather. Anything more disgusting than this practice of eating carcases it is impossible to conceive; and so it is no wonder that those who indulge in it are hated and despised as unclean. The hamlets of these people are surrounded with bones, and the carcase of some buffalo or bullock that has died, perhaps, of disease or of old age, may often be seen lying near ready to be cooked and eaten soon. Anything more revolting it is impossible to imagine than a group of these people squatting round some such object, watching the skinning and cutting

up process and waiting for the dividing of the sickening flesh. The picture is generally rendered all the more horrible by the sight of crows and vultures and village dogs waiting for their turn for a morsel. True, the lot of these people is hard; they often suffer from hunger and are glad to get any thing to satisfy their appetite; but such feeding seems to bring them down to the level of the birds and beasts of prey and it must tend to brutalize and degrade. These despised people have, as a rule, extreme poverty as some excuse for this custom; and perhaps, to their way of thinking, such food is a welcome addition to the miserable meals of pulses or rice, eked out with a few chillies or other cheap condiments, with now and then a morsel of half putrid dried fish, by way of relish. Amongst the very poor also even such meals as these are by no means always plentiful and regular. Often but once a day can the pangs of hunger be appeased. A large number are in a chronic state of hunger. Thus it is a festive time to many when a carcase falls to their share; and they cannot understand our abhorrence of such habits. Such is the power of custom that many of these classes who have risen by hard work and thrift, and are able to afford better food, still indulge in these horrid feasts, when opportunity occurs. The missionaries have wisely made it a hard and fast rule amongst their converts that the eating of dead cattle shall be absolutely given up; and it has become a distinction between Christians and heathen of these classes, that the former do not indulge in this debasing habit. In this way Christianity has had an elevating influence, raising men and women from habits disgusting and degarding and placing them on a higher level of manhood.

It may be asked why Englishmen should not be allowed to use caste wells, when flesh-eating Hindus

and Muhammadans are allowed this privilege. The answer is that they employ low caste servants and also have their food cooked by them. When the Muhammadans came to India they were wise enough only to employ caste men as servants and cooks, hence they themselves have always been treated as caste people. The English, on the contrary, from the first, employed Pariah servants, and hence they also are treated as outcast; food cooked by such servants being of itself unclean and defiling. There may have been reasons why the first English settlers did not follow the example of the Muhammadans in this matter; perhaps necessity compelled them to adopt the course they did, or it may have been merely a result of cynical indifference to the fancies and superstitions of others. It would certainly have been a great gain if the English had been regarded as caste men, in the same way as the Muhammadans are. Then those of the natives who embraced the Christian religion might possibly have been elevated to the same privilege of position. It is not that caste, or anything approaching to it should be encouraged amongst Indian Christians: still it is a most lamentable thing, whatever may have given rise to it, that, although a Muhammadan may draw water from any well and in various other respects is treated as on an equal social footing with respectable Hindus, an Englishman is not allowed the same privilege. The lowest Panchama also on becoming a convert to Islam, is at once allowed all the privileges of his co-religionists. Not only, however, is the Englishman treated as on the same religious level as the Panchama, but in the event of a high caste Brahmin becoming a Christian, even though he may not depart in the least from his former habits as regards diet, he, by the very fact of his change of religion, is made at once to descend to the lowest level in the estimation of his countrymen and is treated as an outcast.

In going over this subject it is impossible not to have been struck with the difference, in this respect, between Hinduism with its rigid rules and regulations and the religion of Christ with its broad holy freedom, and its care for the weakness of others. The Prophet of Nazareth, in contradistinction to the laws of Manu, teaches:—

"Hear, and understand. Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man: but that which cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a man.

Those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart, and they defile the man." (Matt. xv. 11, 18.)

And St. Paul, whilst upholding the broad freedom of the laws of his Master, in the same spirit of charity and carefulness for others which Christ so eminently taught and practised, is careful also to admonish that this same freedom is not to be employed to override all the prejudices and weaknesses of others, but is rather to be used for their good:—

"I know and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that there is nothing unclean of itself; but to him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him it is unclean.

But if thy brother be grieved with thy meat, now walkest thou not charitably. Destroy not him with thy meat for whom Christ died.

All things indeed are pure; but it is evil for that man who eateth with offence.

It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor anything whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak.

If meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend."[1]

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[1] Rom. xiv. 14, 15, 20, 21; 1 Cor. viii. 13.

CHAPTER X.

HINDU FESTIVALS.

पर्वाणि. (Parváni.)

"The birthdays of the gods, and the coronation days of the Manus (legislators and saints), must be punctually observed, with worship and fastings. By this purity of mind and happiness will accrue, and sin will, to a large extent, be destroyed." (Dharma pannam.)

"He who observes not approved customs and he who regards not prescribed duties. . . . . . is to be avoided with great care." (Manu, iii. 165, 166.)

It does not need a very lengthened stay in India to enable a resident there to find out how devoted its people are to the keeping up the numerous and varied festivals, prescribed by custom or religion. It sometimes requires much patience to quietly submit to the inconveniences caused by demands for leave of absence to celebrate this or that feast. And yet these festivals are not without their bright side. They are periods of rest and enjoyment in the lives of many who have not much brightness in their existence; and in this respect, at least, they serve one of the purposes for which the Sabbath was appointed. It is pleasant to think of the dull plodding round of toil being broken, now and then, in the life of the Hindus by a little rest and enjoyment; although it might be desired that the events commemorated were often other than they are, both in origin and in the manner of commemoration.

According to the native almanacs, there are about one hundred and twenty-five festivals of greater or less importance, marked for observance during a year. Some of these have to do with all classes of Hindus, as Samvatsarádi (New Year's day), and some with certain classes only, as Sivarátri (the birthnight of Siva). Some of them are only observed by men, as Krishnajayanti (the birthday of Krishna); whilst others are observed only by women, as Varalakshmivratam, the festival of Lakshmi, the wife of Vishnu. According to the Puránas, about four hundred festivals are to be observed throughout the year, but most of these have fallen into disuse.

In the Hindu almanacs the festivals are fixed as to date; but as the Hindu and the European almanacs are drawn up on different systems, the festivals do not occur upon fixed dates according to our reckoning. Indeed, the Hindu almanacs themselves differ in their systems, the Telugu year being lunar, whilst the Tamil is solar.

It would be a hopeless task to attempt a description of all the Hindu festivals; so I will try to give some idea of the origin of a few of the chief ones, and of the mode in which they are observed. The festivals described are those observed in the Circars, a district in the northern part of the Madras Presidency. I take them in the order in which they occur during the year, and not in the order of their relative importance.

(1) SANKRÁNTI, or the commencement of the sun's northern course in the heavens, occurs in the month Pushya (December—January), or about the middle of January. It is observed by all classes, and lasts for three days. This feast is called Pongal in the south, and is the commencement of the Tamil year. It is a special period of universal rejoicing, being a kind of harvest festival. All work is stopped, and even the passenger boats on the canals do not ply, particularly

on the first two days; the cattle are specially made much of, given a rest, and supplied with extra food. There is also a good deal of cock-fighting, a pastime to which many of the middle and lower classes are particularly addicted. Alms are also freely distributed, and presents are given to dependants. It is also one of the three great festivals when it is the custom to put on new clothes: the other two being the Dasara and Samvatsarádi. During this season it is customary for a wife, together with her husband, to visit her own people, who are then feasted and presented with new clothes and jewels.

Of the three days during which the festival lasts the first is called bhógi (rejoicing) and is the eve to the festival proper. On this day oil baths are universally taken. This does not mean that a bath is taken in a tub of oil, but that the body is rubbed with oil. The houses are cleaned and decorated, and a particular dish is eaten made of new rice and dhál, cooked together in milk. The name Pongal for this feast is said to have arisen from this custom. If the pot boils well, it is thought to be a good omen; therefore when friends meet they ask each other, "Has it boiled (pongal)?" hence the name Pongal. On this day and on the next those classes who usually consume animal food scrupulously abstain from it. The second day is the chief one, when there is special worship and the gods are carried in procession, with much beating of drums, blaring of trumpets, and other barbarous accompaniments of such processions. The third day is devoted to very much the same kind of things as the second.

(2) MAHÁ SIVARÁTRI, or the great night of Siva, is an important festival. Every month has a Sivarátri on the eve of the new moon, when the worshippers of Siva fast all day and perform special rites to their god, but the annual festival is called the great (mahá) night of Siva; and it is held on the eve of the new

moon in Magha (January—February) and commemorates the birth of Siva. The festival lasts one day and is observed by all classes, except those who strictly adhere to the worship of Vishnu. The whole day is kept as a strict fast until midnight, and the lingam is specially worshipped. Pilgrimages are also made to certain rivers and to temples of Siva that may be particularly sacred. On arriving at the place of pilgrimage, the devout will bathe in the adjacent river or tank and then proceed to the temple and perform what is called pradakshinam. This consists of solemnly walking round the temple a greater or less number of times, according to the devoutness of the worshippers. The hands are then placed together in the attitude of prayer (namaskáram), the right shoulder being towards the temple. During this circumambulation the worshippers confess their sins and ask for pardon by repeating various verses (slókams). These verses or prayers are quotations from the Puránas, and so Súdras as well as Brahmins are allowed to repeat them. Many repeat them like parrots without knowing the meaning of the words at all, whilst some cannot even do this. In this latter case, a small fee will procure the assistance of an attendant priest, who will walk round with the worshippers and repeat the verses, the poor illiterate people joining in here and there according to their ability. The following are specimens of the verses thus repeated :—

यानि कानि च पापानि जन्मांतरकृतानि च ।
तानि तानि प्रणश्यंति प्रदक्षिणपदेपदे ॥

"Whatever sins (I may have committed)
In my former births;
Those very sins are destroyed
By each circumambulation."

पापोहं पापकर्माहं पापात्मा पापसंभवः ।
त्राहि मां कृपया देव शरणागतवत्सल ॥

"I am a sinner, a man of sinful deeds,
I am of a corrupt mind, a man born in sin.
Save me of thy mercy O God!
Thou that art merciful to those that flee to thee for refuge."

अन्यथा शरणं नास्ति त्वमेव शरणं मम ।
तस्मात्कारुण्यभावेन रक्षरक्ष महेश्वरः ॥

"I have no other refuge,
Thou alone art my refuge;
Therefore of thy mercy
O Siva! save me, save me."

The worshippers then go into the temple and present offerings of fruit, flowers and camphor, and an offering of money. The officiating priest takes the offering and then waves it before the lingam, burning incense and also repeating, at the same time, various verses. One part of the offering is then returned to the worshipper, and one part is retained by the priest. In the case of a cocoanut, it is broken into halves by the priest, and a portion is returned whilst a portion is retained. The water in the cocoanut is collected in a vessel and poured over the lingam. The worshippers then stoop to receive the priestly blessing, which is given in the following manner. The priest takes a bell-shaped vessel, usually made of brass or copper (rudrapádam—the foot of Siva), and placing it on the head of each worshipper, repeats, as the representative of the worshipper, the following prayer:—

हिरण्यगर्भादिसुरासुराणां किरीटमाणिक्यविराजिमंडितं ।
शिवस्यसत्पादसरोजयुग्मं मदीयमूर्धानिमलंकरिष्यति ॥

"O Siva! bless my head with thy feet,
Which are like unto the lotus,
Adorned with jewels from the crowns of
Brahma, and other gods and demi-gods.

Those who have thus been blessed, then turn to the stone bull (Nandi—the vehicle of Siva) which is in each Siva temple, and repeat several times into its ear the word Hara! Hara! (O destroyer!) This is one of the names of Siva, and here means destroyer of sin. After this the worshippers are at liberty to go away. The same ceremony is, in some cases, repeated in the evening. In the meantime, the people join in the various festivities of the fair, and those who, from age or ill-health, may be unable to keep a longer fast now eat. After the people have all finished their worship, the attendant priests and pandits proceed to bathe the lingam with milk and water, and cocoanut water, and sometimes with oil, repeating the while various verses from the Védas. After the bath is taken, the idol is clothed, and adorned with the sacred thread and the sacred marks. The image is then worshipped by the repetition of the thousand names of Siva. A certain leaf and a flower are dropped over the image at each name. Usually the leaves are those of the bael tree or of the sacred basil, and jasmine or marigold flowers are employed. Then incense is burned, while mantrams are repeated, and camphor is lit and waved before the image. Food is then placed before it, such as curry and rice, fruit, milk and curds. This food is afterwards removed in order to be consumed by the priests. The food is followed by betel which is the usual Indian custom after meals. This is followed by more waving of burning camphor, and the performance of various other acts of worship, such as the placing of flowers and the repetition of mantrams.

This concludes the worship proper. The pandits and other Brahmins who may be present—women also being admitted,—then stand and in a loud voice repeat praises to Siva. The rudrapádam blessing is now given and the assembly disperses. Some of the flowers and leaves are usually given to the men and women

worshippers, with which they adorn themselves. It is very late by this time and the devout may then go and break their fast.

I have described this ceremony somewhat at length, because it represents the usual mode of worship on such special occasions. Every day some worship is gone through on a small scale; and every month, at the Sivarátri, more than ordinary worship is performed. The full ritual is, however, only employed at the annual festival.

(3) Holi is a festival that is held in honour of the god Manmadha or Káma (the Hindu Cupid). It is observed in the month of Phálguna (February—March), and lasts for about fifteen days, of which the last three are the most important. This may be called the festival of the god of lust; and the parading of dancing girls, and the singing of lewd songs form some of the items in it. The mere mention of these facts gives an indication of the whole tone of the festival. Indeed the very word káma is used to describe lust and lechery of every kind. The time is observed as a kind of carnival. The crowds play practical jokes and throw coloured powder over each other. There is no temple worship connected with this festival, as there are no temples to this god. Siva is supposed to have slain this deity by a glance of his third eye (the one in the centre of the forehead), and in commemoration of this, the festival ends with a midnight bonfire, in which an image of the god Káma is burned. The ashes of the fire are rubbed on the body. Altogether it is a disgraceful time and staid sober-minded people do not join in it at all. It is not observed very much in the Telugu country, though in other parts it is said to be very popular.

(4) Srirámajayanti or Sri Rámanavami (the ninth day of Ráma, the seventh incarnation of Vishnu) is a feast observed in honour of the birth of Ráma, which

is said to have taken place on the 9th day of the first half of the month Chaitra (March—April). It lasts for one day. This festival is observed by all classes, except the wearers of the lingam, who are strict Saivites. On this day the Rámáyana (the sacred epic poem of the Hindus recording the adventures of Ráma) is read in private houses and in the temples. In the bazaars also, and in other public places, pandits read and explain this favourite poem to surrounding crowds. Even in small villages some one will be found and asked to read aloud the sacred text, as much merit is supposed to be derived even from the hearing of it. It is said that whoever studies this book is thereby liberated from all his sins and is exalted to the highest heaven.

There is an image of Ráma in almost every village. The number in the towns varies according to their size, for there is no god in India so universally worshipped as this one. The image is adorned and taken in procession through the streets on this day, to the accompaniment of music and the singing of hymns of praise. One great feature of the festival is a pilgrimage, by those who are able to make it, to some celebrated temple of Ráma. Of such temples there appear to be very few. There is a famous one at Bhadrachalam on the Upper Godavari river to which great numbers come, some from very long distances, to be present during the festival. Those who can afford to do so ride in the bullock cart of the country, whilst the majority trudge along on foot, carrying their bundle of rice or other food on their heads. Every now and then a group of these pilgrims, as they journey on, will set up a shout of Góvindá! Góvindá! (a name of Vishnu), which has a strange effect, especially when heard for the first time. The details of the temple worship on this occasion are very much like those already described under Mahá Sivarátri. At

Bhadrachalam, large quantities of food are distributed to the poorer pilgrims, both from the temple stores and also by wealthy pilgrims, who thus acquire much merit (punyam). Sometimes an epidemic will break out at these annual gatherings, when numbers die, and the disease is carried far and wide by the returning pilgrims. Much merit is gained from the pilgrimage and from seeing the face of the god, and so sanitary considerations are made to give way to superstition.

(5) NÁGASAVITI is a festival in honour of the Nágas. It occurs on the 4th day of the first part of the month Kártika (October—November). The Nágas are a race of serpents supposed to be half human, the head and body to the waist being human and the rest serpent. They are said to inhabit the regions under the earth (nágalokum). This race of demi-gods is supposed to be malevolent and, therefore, much of the worship is for the purpose of deprecating their wrath. The Nágasaviti festival is observed by all classes and lasts for one day. The real object sought for by the masses is to be preserved from being bitten by snakes; but there is also some idea that these monsters are able to cure certain diseases, chiefly those of the skin.

The principal object of worship on this day is the cobra, which is considered to be the chief of the snakes. The worship is mainly done by the women who, accompanied by a family priest, go to the nearest white ant heap, a favourite abode of the cobra, taking with them milk and flowers, and a dish prepared with ground rice, jaggery, and camphor. The worshippers, having previously bathed, let their hair hang down and then perform a service at the ant-hill, by repeating the name of the god, pouring milk down the hole and scattering flowers over the hillock. If a priest is present, he repeats the form called sankalpam, which consists chiefly of mentioning the names of the place,

day, month, year, and the names of the worshippers. The dish on which the food has been placed is then offered by the waving of the hand from it towards the supposed abode of the snake, certain words being repeated the while. The worship is concluded by placing burning incense by the side of the hole. The women, who may be accompanied by their children, then return home, where the food, together with water sweetened with jaggery (a coarse sugar), is partaken of as a festive meal. This serpent worship is universal throughout India. There is a certain amount of danger necessarily incurred in thus trifling with such deadly creatures. I remember, when in the town of Ellore in the Kistna District, hearing of a poor woman who met her death through engaging in this method of worship. She was pouring milk down a snake hole when a cobra darted out and bit her so that she died.

(6) KRISHNAJAYANTI, or the birthday of Krishna, is commemorated in Southern India on the 8th day of the dark half of the month Srávana (August—September). Krishna is said to have been born during the 8th night. It is observed by all classes except the Lingaits, and the festival lasts for two days. This is one of the most popular of the annual festivals, and is a time of fun and rejoicing. The usual temple festival worship is performed, but generally not on a very large scale, and there are no pilgrimages to shrines. As is the case with the "Rámáyanam" at Srirámajayanti, so at this festival, the "Bhágavatam" is read. This is a celebrated Hindu poem describing the life of Krishna. During the birthnight much worship is performed to this god in the temples and also in private houses. The "Bhágavatam" is read and hymns are sung in praise of the god, to the accompaniment of music and cymbals and drums, and some sections of the Hindus fast from the evening of the seventh to

the morning of the ninth. The real fun is on the ninth. On this day there are the usual processions of the images accompanied by dancing girls and the singing of hymns to the praise of Krishna, and repetitions of mantrams by attendant pandits. Much amusement is afforded by things got up in memory of Krishna's stealing the curds and butter. Two upright poles are fixed in the earth in public places, usually across the street, and a cross pole is attached to the top which is adorned with leaves, flowers and banners. A pulley is attached to the centre of this cross bar, through which a string is rove, suspending an earthen pot containing milk and a few coins. The pot is covered over with a cocoanut. A person holds the other end of the string and pulls the pot up and down. Youths, usually of the golla or milkmen caste—Krishna was reared in a golla house—leap and try to touch the pot, which is dexterously jerked out of reach by the person holding the string. Whoever succeeds in touching the pot gets its contents as a prize. All this affords much fun, and the competitors are drenched with coloured water (vasantam), which is squirted or thrown over them by the revellers as they leap about. Greasy poles are also set up, or posts smeared with tar: the contents of a pot fixed at the top being the prize of the successful climber. Altogether it is a day of fun and rejoicing, of a very innocent nature as compared with the abominations of the Holi festival.

(7) Vináyakachaturthi is the great festival of the birth day of Vináyaka or Ganésa. This deity is said to have been the son of Siva and Durgá or Káli. He is supposed to ward off obstacles and difficulties and is, therefore, worshipped at the commencement of all important undertakings in order to avert the interference of evil demons. The worship of Ganésa is very popular and so this festival is observed by all classes except the strict Vaishnavas. His image is that of a man's

body with an elephant's head, and a very protuberant stomach to denote his gluttony. The feast is held on the fourth day of the light half of the month Bhadrapada (August—September) and is observed for one day. There is no particular worship in the temples, nor are there any processions. All the worship is done in private houses. In that portion of the house where worship is wont to be performed, a small clay platform is erected and adorned with a powder made of ground rice mixed with colouring matter, and upon this a clay image of Ganésa is placed. These images are made by the potters in immense numbers at this season, as each house, however poor, must have one. They are simply made of clay formed in a mould, and cost about one pie (half a farthing) each. When the image is placed on the platform, several lights are placed before it, and a mantram of consecration is said upon which the spirit of the god is said to enter into it. Worship is performed to this image by repeating certain prayers and after that by dropping upon it, one by one, twenty-one different kinds of certain leaves and the same number of certain flowers. During this operation the thousand names of the god are repeated. Food is also placed before the image, especially hard balls made of ground rice with pounded Bengal gram and some cocoanut. Of the prayers that are said the following is a specimen :—

शुक्लांबरधरं विष्णुं शशिवर्णं चतुर्भुजं ।
प्रसन्नवदनं ध्यायेत् सर्वविघ्नोपशांतये ॥

"Meditate upon the white-robed omnipresent one,
In colour like unto the moon, and having four arms,
The Elephant-faced one (Ganésh),
For the removal of all obstacles."

This worship takes place at mid-day and is repeated in the evening after sunset, up to which time the

lights must be kept burning before the image. However poor the people may be they will have, at least, one small light burning. If in a house there are only one or two people and they are very poor, they will join with others for this worship.

It is at this feast that the artisans worship their tools and the students their books, which is done by placing them before the image, and, when the worship is finished, sprinkling them with rice which has been coloured red and with sandalwood paste. The ceremony is concluded by circumambulating the platform and image, at the same time repeating prayers. Some of the flowers and leaves which have been used in the worship are taken by the worshippers to adorn their own persons. On the third day, the little image is taken and thrown into running water—a river or stream—or into a well or tank; that is, anywhere where it cannot be trodden upon or otherwise defiled. The same is done with the flowers and leaves that have been used in the worship.

Those who are rowdy amongst the people have much fun during the darkness of the night, throwing stones on houses, or putting down thorny seeds in front of them, which when trodden upon by the bare foot pierce it and cause pain. The idea is that the blame and curses evoked by this will be turned into blessings upon the perpetrators of the mischief.

It is customary, sometime during the evening before dark, for groups of people to assemble in a neighbour's house to hear a story called "Samantakam." It is related how the sun, being pleased with a certain king named Satrajitt, gave to him a mythological jewel called samantakam, which he had taken from his own necklace. It is supposed that those who do not hear this story before seeing the moon, will run the risk of having some false charge or other made against them, or in some way be subject to slander or calumny. The

origin of the custom seems to be a story which is briefly as follows:—Ganésa being very much distended after a heavy meal, was on his way to the temple to worship his father Sivā, when the moon cast a look upon him so malevolent that his body burst. Upon this Ganésa, being irritated, cursed the moon, saying that whoever looked upon it would be subject to slander, and calumny and like evils. The moon thereupon craved pardon for having disturbed the equanimity of the son of Siva; but the curse was only removed on condition that, before looking upon the moon, everybody should hear the story of "Samantakam." After this little episode Ganésa proceeded on his way to the temple, where his father by a stroke of his hand healed his suffering.

(8) Dasara, or Durgápuja, is observed during the first half of the month Ashvayuja (September—October) and lasts for ten days. The tenth day is called Vijayadasami (the victorious tenth day). This festival is observed by all Sáktass, or worshippers of the female principle and is held in especial honour of Durgá, the wife of Siva. Her image, or what represents her image, is worshipped for nine days and on the tenth it is cast into water. In the Telugu country no image is used, but the goddess is represented by a new brass drinking vessel or an earthen pot, containing nine kinds of grain, turmeric roots and coins. The mouth of the vessel is covered with a cocoanut and a folded piece of cloth. The whole is then adorned with leaves of the mango tree.

During this feast alms are freely distributed, musicians go about playing on their instruments and demanding gifts. Native school masters take their pupils, all dressed in their best, to the houses of those who are likely to give them anything and ask for presents. Their request is liberally responded to. The pupils who go with them carry bows and arrows, the arrows having

a cup-like termination into which sweet smelling powder is placed. This the pupils shoot out upon those whom they visit. They also recite various things they have learnt. Such recitations always begin with a verse in praise of Ganésa. The pupils get presents of fruit and sweets, whilst the masters get money or cloths. In this way indigenous learning is encouraged.

In 1884 there was a Hindu revival. A Rámabhajana party, carrying a kalasam, the representation of Durgá, went in procession from their village to two adjoining villages. They were then joined by another party from each of the latter, which called itself Ráma Dandu or Ŕama's army. The triple party then went in turn to each of the three villages adjoining two of the original triplet. From each of these, a new triplet branched out and repeated the process; so that the movement, believed to have started from somewhere in Mysore, spread in all directions. As Ráma's army is said to have consisted of monkeys, it was considered the proper thing for its antitype to engage in all kinds of mischievous pranks; and so its members broke branches off the trees, pulled tiles and thatch off roofs, knocked the turbans off people they met in the way and insisted on their shouting 'Góvindás!' and disturbed Muhammadans at worship by singing uproariously before mosques. This produced ill-feeling and riots between the Hindus and Muhammadans. Unfortunately, before the animus could subside, the Muharram and Dasara festivals partly coincided for three years. During that time, the Hindus, in the places where the riots occurred, did not take any part in the Muharram, although the carnival portion of that commemoration of the martyrdom of Muhammad's grandson Husain used in former years to be largely observed by the Hindus. Having deprived themselves of this fun, the Hindus appear to have attempted to compensate themselves by getting up during the next Dasara a caricature of the

Muharram.[1] Had the details been purely Hindu adaptations, they would, probably have passed unnoticed. But they were considered by the Musâlmans, rightly or wrongly, to be gross caricatures and intentionally offensive. The Muhammadans objected especially to the introduction into the Dasara of the tiger disguise. The reason for this appears to be that this disguise has, in Southern India, come to be looked upon as the most distinctive feature of the Muharram. The way in which this commemoration of a mournful event became converted into a carnival is alleged to be this. The Mogul Emperors and the Musalman kings of the Deccan sometimes chose Hindu consorts. One of these is believed, when in trouble, to have endeavoured to add to the efficacy of her invocation of Husain for his intercession, by vowing that if her prayer were answered she would exhibit some members of her family in a humiliating disguise during the Muharram. The object of her prayer being accomplished, she kept her vow. Her example was followed by other devout and anxious parents and others. The fame of the success of such vows induced Hindus also to make similar vows. To the original humiliating disguises, was afterwards added that of the tiger, an indication of readiness to fight for Islám like a tiger, a simile invariably employed to describe the fighting of the faithful followers of Husain on the occasion which is commemorated by the Muharram. This disguise, more than any other, caught the fancy of the Hindus, who did not trouble to become acquainted with its significance.

(9) DEEPAVALI, or the feast of lamps, is observed on the last two days of the dark fortnight of the month Áshvayuja (September—October) and is taken part in by all classes of Hindus. It is held in memory of

[1] For an account of the origin of the Muharram, see Sell's "Faith of Islám," (3rd edition, 1907), pp. 352-9; also Herklot's "Qanún-i-Islám" (ed. Madras, 1863), pp. 98-148.

Krishna's victory over Narakásura, the wicked giant (Rákshasa). Its chief features are the lighting up of the houses with numerous little lamps and the letting off of fire-works. There are no special temple services or processions at this season. It is merely a time of popular rejoicing. The streets present a very gay appearance at night on account of the numerous lights that are placed in front of the houses. Mimic combats take place in the streets between parties who hurl lighted fire-works at each other, and these battles sometimes become very real, ending in a good deal of rioting. Altogether the streets, particularly on the second night of the festival, are not a very safe or pleasant place for quietly disposed people.

(10) KÁRTIKÁPÚRNIMA, or the full moon of the month of Kártika (October—November), is a festival observed in commemoration of Siva's victory over the three giants (tripurásura). These giants are said to have inhabited three celestial cities made respectively of gold, silver and iron, which were adjacent to each other and were capable of being moved about in company at the will of the giants. These malevolent beings were a constant source of trouble to gods and men, who, at length, unable to bear it any longer prayed to Siva for deliverance from the evil. This god slew the troublesome tripurásura and utterly destroyed their cities. This festival is observed on the full moon of Kártika and is kept by all classes except strict Vaishnavas. It lasts only for one day and one night.

The day preceding the full moon is observed by the devout as a strict fast. In the early morning it is necessary to bathe in the sea if possible or, failing that, in a river or pond or some other water. After the moon has risen, special worship is performed in the temples of Siva. The image is then taken in procession through the streets with the usual musical and

other accompaniments. In all these processions of the gods it is not the chief idol of the temple that is taken out, for the chief idol is never removed from its position for any purpose whatever, after it has once been placed and consecrated (pratishta). What is used upon such occasions is a representative or rather two representatives, which are kept for the purpose; one to represent the god and the other his wife. When the gods are taken in procession, it is not to give the gods an airing, as is popularly supposed. The idea is that those who are unable to go to the temple and look upon the image there should have a chance of seeing its face in this way. The passing of the gods through the streets is also supposed to purify and bless the streets and houses. As the procession moves along, the devout may be seen placing their hands together and making obeisance to the god. Some bring offerings of various kinds which are placed in a receptacle under the car upon which the idol sits, and the priest blesses the giver.

A peculiar custom is followed when the procession returns to the temple. Two high poles are erected in front of the temple to which a thick wreath of straw is attached. It stretches across the road. It is then set on fire and the whole procession must pass under the burning wreath. This in some way refers to the triumph of Siva over the tripurásura.

It is at this festival that women especially of the Smartha sect especially worship the moon, with a view to the obtaining of such blessings as male offspring, long life and prosperity. This worship is performed in the following manner. After the temple worship, women, in various groups, take a small thin silver medal which is stamped with the shape of the moon, and place it upon some large leaf like that of the plantain or lotus. This is laid upon the ground in the courtyard of the temple under the full rays of

the moon. Upon the leaf is placed a little heap of rice upon which is put a betel leaf, and upon this again is placed a little sandalwood paste, and on the top of that the little silver medal. Each separate group will have one of these temporary altars. Worship is then performed in the usual way by placing before it little lights made of ghee and a wick in brass saucers, and by dropping upon it coloured rice, leaves and flowers, at the same time mentioning some of the names of the moon. An attendant priest—in the case of well-to-do people their own family priest—repeats a prayer in the name of the worshippers, and the worship is concluded by the women waving lighted camphor before the object of worship, saying at the same time some kind of prayer, as an expression of their particular need or required boon. The little heap of things on the leaf, the medal included, is given to the priest as a fee.

The women who engage in this worship do not include young unmarried women or widows or the aged. The prayer rxpeated by the priest, in the name of those for whom he is officiating, will serve to show the object with which the worship is done. It is as follows:

रोहिणीनाथ सर्वज्ञ प्रतिमापूजितो भवान् ।
आयुरारोग्यमैश्वर्यं देहि मे पुत्रसंपदं ॥

"O thou Omniscient husband of Rohini,[1]
Who art worshipped in this image,
Grant me long life, health, prosperity,
And male progeny."

(11) SAMVATSARÁDI is the festival of the new year. The Telugu New Year's day is the first day of the month Chaitra (March—April) and is observed by all classes. It lasts for one day only. This is not, strictly

[1] Rohini is supposed to be the wife of Chandra, the moon.

speaking, a religious festival (vratam), and, therefore, there are no special temple services or processions. The chief features of the day are the reading of the new almanac, and, hearing the forecast of the events of the New Year. New clothes also are worn, when procurable, and the food partaken of during the day is, as far as possible, composed of new materials, i.e., new grain, pulses and such like, for this is a feast of ingathering. One dish, which must be partaken of by all who wish for good luck during the year, is a conserve composed of sugar, tamarind and the flowers of the neem or margosa tree, which is then in full flower. The bitter taste of this is not much relished as a rule; but it is necessary that at least a small portion of the dish should be eaten. This seems to be analogous to the English idea that it is necessary to eat mince pie at Christmas or at the New Year.

(12) MAHÁLAYA AMÁVÁSYA, the new moon of the great destruction, is observed as a day for making offerings to the manes of the dead, who, through dying other than a natural death, may not have received the usual death rites. It occurs on the new moon of the month Bhádrapada (September—October) and is observed by all classes. It only lasts for one day. On this day the head of a family must perform prescribed ceremonies for the preceding three generations. Even if there is no knowledge of any ancestors having died other than a natural death in the full odour of sanctity, it is still necessary that the rites should be performed, lest there may have been some accident. The ceremonies are very similar to the usual annual ceremonies for the dead.[1]

In addition to the occasions already mentioned, there are four seasons in the year that are considered very important, and when it is necessary, if possible, to

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[1] An account of these will be given in chapter xii.

bathe in the sea. These seasons are the day of the full moon of Mágha (February), Vaisákam (April—May), Ashádha (June—July), and Kártika (October—November). Those within reach of the sea will then make an effort to go there in order to take this holy bath. At all new moons it is also beneficial to bathe in the sea, but at times other than these feast days and new moons it is highly improper even to touch sea water. All rivers flow into the sea, so at these seasons bathing in its waters is equal to bathing in all the sacred rivers in the world. By this all sins, even of the most heinous kind, are completely washed away. Failing the sea, a bath must be taken in a river or a tank or at a well, but, a bath in the sea is considered the most beneficial of all. Long before daylight crowds of people wend their way to the sea shore, some on foot and others in vehicles of various kinds. It is better to go on foot, as it is a kind of pilgrimage, and a pilgrimage is more meritorious when done on foot. Before actually setting out for the sea shore, the devout bathe at home, and also again upon their return. The bathing must also be done fasting.

The bathing is done as follows. The bather walks into the water accompanied by a Brahmin, who repeats the sankalpam (the name of the place, time, etc.) Then the bather dips under the water three times. After this he makes three oblations to the sun by throwing up water towards it and saying hail to the sun (súryáya namahá), after which he again dips under three times. He then comes ashore and makes a little heap of sand which he proceeds to worship as though it were his particular deity. The worship is done in the usual way by dropping over the object flowers and coloured powder. After this worship is over, the worshipper takes up the little heap of sand and casts it into the sea. He then gives a fee to the Brahmin who blesses him and it is all over. Those who are in a position

to do so bring their own family priest to perform this ceremony for them; but there are plenty of Brahmins at hand ready to take advantage of the piety of the faithful. All the bathers do not go through the full performance; some merely bathe and make an oblation to the sun, without much further attempt at worship. Beggars in every stage of dirt and disease may be seen and heard, for the road is lined with them. Here may be seen a leper, lying on the sand with a cloth spread in front of him to receive alms; and there a miserable cripple, holding up his withered stump of an arm or leg to appeal to the compassion of the passers by. My lord, my lord, charity is prosperity (Mahárája, Mahárája, dharmamé jayam, dharmamé jayam)—these and similar cries are shouted out, and the passers by throw a handful of rice, or a few cowrie shells, or a coin on the cloth as they pass by. There are stalls of the sweetmeat sellers and the toy vendors and the various surroundings of an Indian fair. The whole presents a scene at once lively and gay.

Besides these general festivals, there are local festivals, observed at a particular locality, or at places where a temple or shrine has been put up in honour of some particular god or demigod.

I give a description of a local festival which I have seen. Near to Masulipatam there is a temple dedicated to the wife of Siva under her title of Mahishásura Mardhani, or the destroyer of the demon buffalo. This buffalo monster (rákshasa) did much evil, and so tradition says, was at length destroyed by Gauri or Durgá. The temple is in her honour. The chief festival of this temple is held once a year in the month Chaitra (March—April) and it lasts altogether for sixteen days. On the evening of the last day, which is the day after the full moon, there is a great procession called Ambáriutsavam, or the elephant procession. This procession passes through the town, and for about a mile

beyond, to a place where a zammi[1] tree formerly grew. This tree is an emblem of victory. The great temple car is also dragged out. In former days the car is said to have been taken all along the route with the procession; but since the Kistna canal has been dug it presents an impassable barrier to so cumbrous a machine. There is an iron girder bridge over the canal, not strong enough to be safe for the car to cross so it is only brought up a short distance to the canal, and is then taken back to the temple. The principal feature in the procession is a large elephant bearing in a howdah the procession gods of the temple, and having upon its neck the Dharmakarta, or temple patron, a local Rajah of some position. It is said that a former Rajah of this house endowed the temple with lands which bring in Rs. 12,000 (£800) per annum. How far this amount represents the real revenue I cannot say. The procession is supposed to represent a hunt (páru veta or running prey) and is probably in some way connected with the legend upon which the festival is founded. It was late at night when I heard the din of the approaching multitude, as I went to a place near which the procession would end. The huge elephant, most gaily caprisoned, came solemnly along bearing its imposing burden. The Rajah, upon this occasion, was represented by his son. There were horses and bullock carts, the latter for the musicians, who with their barbarous instruments made a great noise. A troup of dancing girls marched along with their attendants, and an immense crowd of people crushed along on either side of the procession. The torches and lights lit up the whole throng, and, together with the bright moon, made it as light as day. When a halt was made, near I suppose to the imaginary zammi tree, I made my way to the centre of the throng. A circle

[1] Mimosa suma.

was formed in the midst of which, squatted down on the ground, were several Brahmin priests who performed the ceremony. A naked sword was held up by one, the hilt resting on the ground and pointing upwards. This sword was kept in the temple as the one, or as representing the one, with which Durga slew the demon and to it worship was performed. A priest sprinkled it with water, pinches of kunkama[1] powder and other things. The celebrant meanwhile repeated verses or mantrams in a rapid voice; but the noise made his voice almost inaudible. No one seemed to pay much attention to what he said. The dancing girls then began their usual monotonous singing and contortions. I could not but reflect, with much sadness, that such religion and worship are supposed to be an acceptable service to God. Truly they worship they know not what. "They have no knowledge that set up the wood of their graven image, and pray unto a god that cannot save." (Isaiah xlv. 20.)

The following are the words enjoined by the Purânas to be said by the priest at the conclusion of the household worship performed at Hindu festive seasons. They will serve to indicate the motive which actuates those who observe the various festivals, and so may fitly conclude this chapter.

ये कुर्वंति व्रतमिदं । भक्तिश्रद्धासमन्विता: ।
ते सर्वपापनिर्मुक्ता: । यास्यंति परमांगतिं ।
तत्तत्फलमवाप्नोति । देवेशस्य प्रसादत: ॥

"Whosoever observes this rite
With care and with a devout mind,
Will be freed from all his sins,
And will inherit heaven.
He will realize all his desires
By the favour of the great God."

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[1] *Ante*, p. 11.

CHAPTER XI.

HINDU MENDICITY.

याचन. (Yáchana.)

"By open confession, by repentance, by devotion and by reading the Scripture, a sinner may be released from his guilt; or by almsgiving in case of his inability to perform the other acts of religion." (Manu, xi. 228.)

"Both he who respectfully bestows a present, and he who respectfully accepts it shall go to a seat of bliss; but, if they act otherwise, to a region of horror." (Manu, iv. 235.)

THE virtue of almsgiving is most fitly enjoined upon the adherents of most religious system; but there are many and very radical differences in the motives that underlie the exercise of this grace. That the mere indiscriminate giving of our substance is not true charity is a fundamental truth, which finds expression in the old Jewish proverb quoted by St. Paul in one of his Epistles:—"If any would not work neither should he eat."[1] The sturdy mendicant is still to be met with, even in European countries, but public opinion decidedly protests against such impositions. In the East, however, and especially in India, the principles regulating almsgiving are widely different from those of the West. If a man happens to belong to a certain section of the community, or if he chooses to abandon all honest toil, and set himself up as a mendicant, then, according to the Hindu theory, it is a

[1] 2 Thessalonians, iii. 10.

duty to part with one's substance in his behalf, quite irrespective of other and more righteous considerations. My lord! My lord! Charity is prosperity! Charity is prosperity!—the everlasting cry of the roadside beggar—exactly expresses this idea. Mere giving is meritorious, quite apart from the worthiness of the recipient, and without any thought as to indiscriminate giving being demoralizing and rather productive of evil than good. The sleek, well-fed mendicant goes his wonted round, and he must not be denied under pain of possible evils, contingent or remote, temporal or spiritual.

No one will deny that this spirit of almsgiving has its good side. It provides, at least, an existence for the poor, the halt, the blind and the helpless, who might otherwise be left to perish where there is no public system of relief, as provided by Poor Law Boards and similar institutions in other lands. Many and great are the blessings resulting to the miserable and the destitute from this universal exercise of almsgiving; but carried to excess, as it is in India, and unregulated by wholesome restrictions, it not only tends to rob the industrious for the sake of the indolent; but, from the point of view of the political economist, it is a tax upon the resources of the country that creates and fosters an unproductive section to the detriment of the whole community. If any will not work, will not add his quota to the general weal, though perfectly capable of so doing, neither should he eat.

It was natural, when the various rules regulating the life of the community were drawn up by Brahmins, that they should have followed the universal law of human nature and have taken care of their own class. Much is said about alms in the sacred books of the East; but, to a very large extent, these books deal with the necessity of bestowing alms and gifts on

Brahmins. In the Institutes of Manu it is stated that an oblation in the mouth or hand of a Brahmin is far better than offerings to holy fire, it never drops, it never dries, it is never consumed. A gift to one not a Brahmin produces fruit of a middle standard; to one who calls himself a Brahmin, double; to a well-read Brahmin, a hundred thousand fold; to one who has read all the Vedas, infinite.[1] Manu also says:—"Let every man, according to his ability, give wealth to Brahmins, detached from the world and learned in Scripture; such a giver shall attain heaven after this life."[2] Very early in the statutes, a universal law is proclaimed, the spirit of which pervades the whole code. This law calmly lays down that whatever exists in the universe is all, in effect, though not in form, the wealth of the Brahmins; since the Brahmin is entitled to it all by his primogeniture and eminence of birth. The Brahmin eats but his own food, wears but his own apparel, and bestows but his own in alms; through the benevolence of the Brahmin indeed other mortals enjoy life.[3] This is a broad principle to enunciate, so it is easy to see how there is nothing derogatory in a Brahmin's receiving alms. He takes but what is his own, and leaves a blessing to the giver.[4]

According to religious enactment, a Brahmin's life is divided into four great stages, the first of which is that of a student. After being invested with the sacred thread and initiated into the Brahminical order[5] he is supposed to leave his father's house and reside for some years with a religious teacher, as an unmarried

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[1] Manu, vii. 84-5. [2] Ibid, xi. 6. [3] Ibid, i. 100-1.

[4] The Persian idea of savâb, or merit, by which the reward passes not to the doer, if a non-Muslim, but to the Muslim recipient has some affinity to this idea. (Malcolm's "Five Years in a Persian Town," p. 100.)

[5] *Ante*, p. 18.



BRAHMIN MENDICANT AND DISCIPLE.

student. This is in order that he may acquire a knowledge of the Vedas. During this period the student should live by alms, begged for by himself; and although this state of things is perhaps nowhere carried out in its entirety in these modern days, still even now, at the investiture, the neophyte must ask for alms from those present as a part of the ceremony. Thus Manu says:—

"Each day must a Brahmin student receive his food by begging, with due care, from the houses of persons renowned for discharging their duties, and not deficient in performing the sacrifices which the Veda ordains." (Manu ii. 183.)

A vestige of this old Vedic custom still remains, though it has changed somewhat in form to suit modern requirements, and is seen in a system by which the charitably disposed assist the poor Brahmin boys in their education, and in providing meals for them. One family will agree to give one or two meals a day to a certain student for a certain day in the week, and others will do the same until the whole week is provided for throughout the year. There is nothing lowering to the student in thus subsisting by charity. It is taken as a natural sort of thing and adds merit to the donors. It is not usual, I believe, to provide in this way for any other than Brahmin students. A poor student will sometimes say that he lives 'by weeks,' that is, each day of the week he gets his food at a different house.

The following extracts from the "Mahábhárata," show the personal benefits to be derived from supporting students:—

1. विद्यादानं महद्दानम् अन्नदानं महत्फलम् ।
तद्दानात्पुण्यमाप्नोति सर्वपापैश्च मुच्यते ॥

"Imparting knowledge is conferring a great boon.
Giving of food is most meritorious."

विद्याविनयवृद्धोनाम् अन्नाद्यं वासराण्यनु ।
प्रयच्छन्नित्यमव्यग्रः परलोकफलाशयः ॥

"Those who to the humble scholar
Give food every day,
Regularly and ungrudgingly,
With desire for heaven, (will obtain it)."

The laws and customs of India are very kind to the poor traveller and many who have occasion to move about from one place to another, though utterly devoid of means, are able to do so with comparative comfort. The traveller is always sure of a meal when he arrives at a village, if he waits until the midday or evening meal is served. The laws of hospitality in India are very real; and it is imperatively binding upon those, who can do so, to give food to needy travellers, regardless of caste or condition. A Brahmin must go to Brahmins for caste reasons; and a Sudra, or Panchama will go, in the first place, to his own people by preference; but if his own people cannot help him, he is sure of something, even from the Brahmin. To send a hungry suppliant empty away is not only unkind, it is a positive sin. There are many enactments on this point, and these are all held binding upon the hearts and consciences of the people. The following are specimens taken from the "Mahábhárata."

अतिथिर्यस्य भग्नाशो गृहात्प्रति निवर्तते ।
पितरः तस्य नश्यंति दशवर्षाणि पंच च ॥

"From whosesoever house
The stranger goes empty away,
His ancestors will perish
For fifteen generations."

पापो वा यदि चंडालो विप्रघ्नः पितृघातुकः ।
वैश्वदेवेतु संप्राप्तः सोतिथिस्स्वर्गसंक्रमः ॥

"Were he a sinner or an outcast,
Or even a Brahminicide, or parricide,
Whoever is entertained at meal time,
That stranger will cause the host to attain heaven."
(Svargam.)

I do not quarrel with such casual mendicity; I commend such almsgiving, though it is easy to see how the thing may be abused by the lazy loafing tramp. I cannot, however, view with any such complacence the regular systematic mendicity that abounds on all hands, and that must be a great drain upon the resources of the people. I allude to the professional religious beggars, a fraternity answering in some respects to the begging Friars of the Middle Ages, although they are under no vows and do not live in communities. This profession is not confined to any particular caste or section of the community, and there are many varieties of it. It is impossible to give here a full and complete catalogue of the brotherhood. I can only take a few specimens, from which a fairly accurate notion may be formed of the whole.

First, I will give a description of the mendicant Brahmin. In inculcating the merit of almsgiving, it is always enunciated that the highest form of charity is to give to the Brahmin. Manu, after mentioning various conditions in which one may be placed, goes on to say:—

"To these most excellent Brahmins must rice also be given with holy presents at oblations to fire and within the consecrated circle; but the dressed rice, which others are to receive, must not be delivered on the outside of the sacred hearth: gold and the like may be given anywhere.

Let every man, according to his ability, give wealth to Brahmins detached from the world and learned in Scripture: such giver shall attain heaven after this life" (xi. 3, 6).

Whatever the original theory may have been, it is far from being the case that all Brahmins live in these

modern days by gifts and alms. The learned professions and other walks of life are crowded with Brahmins, who labour for their subsistence as do others. Probably it is only the principle of the thing, as stated by Manu, that now survives; though it is a principle that in various parts and in manifold ways is still acted upon. There is, however, even now, a section of Brahmins who are professional mendicants, who depend for their daily sustenance upon the alms of the faithful. These are principally the Pánchángam Brahmins. A pánchángam is an almanack, the word being compounded of pancha, five and angam, a number or division. This alludes to the five specific things taken into consideration in computing by astrology, viz., the lunar day, the day of the week, the sign in which the moon happens to be, the conjunction of the planets and the combinations. The Pánchángam Brahmin is one who, by studying the almanack, is able to state propitious or unpropitious times. He gets his livelihood by going certain rounds, day by day, from house to house, declaring the condition of things according to the almanack, and receiving in return a dole usually consisting of grain. He is not held in much respect by his own caste people, but he is looked up to by the other castes. He is consulted by his constituents, from time to time, when they wish to know the propitious period for any undertaking, such as starting on a journey, making an important purchase, putting on new clothes or new jewels, or when about to take up a new appointment, or when any other important event is contemplated. He is a Smartha by sect, a worshipper of Siva and wears the marks of that god; but at the same time he respects and worships Vishnu. He dresses very plainly, or rather he dresses very little. He has on the loin cloth and an upper cloth is worn over his shoulder. His head is bare, but, as a Smartha should be, he is plentifully marked with the three

horizontal white marks of Siva on the forehead, across the shoulders, on the breast and stomach, on the upper and lower parts of each arm, and across the back of the neck. He wears the sacred thread, hanging over his left shoulder, as a sign of being a twice-born. In his hands he carries a copy of the current almanack and a brass vessel in which he collects his doles. He does not confine his attention to Brahmins, but he goes also to the other castes, except the Panchamas and a few other sections of the community, considered to be too inferior for his attention. On going his daily round, when he comes to a house, he shouts out Hail Sítá and Ráma! (Sítárámábhyam namah); or Hail to the beneficent supreme god Ráma! (Ramachendra parabrahmané namah); or Hail to Siva and his wife Umá! (Umá Mahéshvarábhyam namah); or some other expressions of the same kind. The people of the house, upon hearing the call, present themselves, when he will go just inside and repeat the details of the almanack for the day, his particular point being to tell the unpropitious period of the day. After this he receives his dole of rice or, very occasionally, a coin or two. He then takes his departure to the next house on his list. The native almanack is headed with slókas declaring the benefits to be derived from hearing the pánchángam. The following is a specimen of these verses:—

पंचांगश्रवणं पुण्यम् सर्वकर्मसुसाधकम् ।
प्रत्यहं बुद्धिमान् कुर्यात् सर्वपापक्षयो भवेत् ॥

"Hearing the almanack is meritorious;
In all undertakings it ensures success.
The prudent must never fail to hear it;
By this all sins will be destroyed."

The declaring of the almanack by the pánchángam Brahmin is somewhat as follows: He begins by repeating, in a sing-song voice and at a very rapid rate,

some such verses as the one quoted above, showing the benefits to be derived from hearing the almanack. He then goes on, in a more deliberate manner, to state the details of the day. Those for the day I am now writing about would be as follows; manmadha náma samvatsara; chaitrabahula; dashami; shanivaram 45, 56; shravanam nakshatram 40, 44; vishkambha yógam 20, 18; karanam kimstughnam 14, 15; varjam divi 23, 1; tyajyam 3, 30; dinapramánam 31, 20; ashvaní 1; arkhabhukti 1, 15; chandu 20; April 20.

Bearing in mind that a Hindu hour is equal to twenty-four English minutes and that thus the hour forms the sixtieth part of a day, the meaning of the words recited would be, the year Manmatha; the month Chaitra; the dark fortnight; the tenth day of that fortnight; the name of the day, Saturday; the length of the day, forty-five hours and fifty-six minutes; the star in the ascendant being Shravanam, lasting for forty hours and forty-four minutes; the conflux of vishkamba, lasting for twenty hours and eighteen minutes; the combination kimstughnam, lasting for fourteen hours and fifteen minutes; the unpropitious time commencing the first minute of the twenty-third hour of the day, lasting until the thirtieth minute of the third hour; the length of the daytime thirty-one hours and twenty minutes; the sun being in the first quarter of Ashvani; the sun having passed one hour and fifteen minutes of its present sign (Aries); the twentieth day of the moon, English time, April 20th.

It is the custom in many houses to set apart a certain portion of grain each morning, to be distributed to the beggars who may come that day. The grain is put into a small basket and is given into the charge of an elderly woman, or of one of the children, or of some person who may not be engaged in household duties. When the mendicant comes before the door and cries out for alms, the one in charge of the basket

will give a handful or two of grain, according to the quantity set aside for charity. Should the supply become exhausted through the multitude of callers, a further supply may be given out, if the household can afford it; otherwise the late comers must depart without receiving anything. Sunday appears to be a specially good and most propitious day for beggars. More alms are distributed on Sunday than on other days. When the pánchángam gentleman appears he is received by some of the elders who may happen to be at home, as his daily message is of importance.

Another class of professional mendicants is the Jangam mendicant. The Jangamas are a sect of Saivas who wear the lingam on their person, either in a box suspended from the neck, or else tied in a cloth round the arm. They are a class of Sudras, who, theoretically, do not hold caste distinctions and in various other ways repudiate Brahminical rites. Many of this sect follow the profession of tailors and dress-makers, whilst many are native musicians and some are professional beggars. The Jangam beggar has the upper part of his face and eyes plentifully covered with the white horizontal marks of Siva. He is also clean shaven, and does not even wear the universal top-knot. He is more plentifully clothed than the ordinary mendicant, his chief garment being a long reddish-coloured coat. He also wears a cap. He carries in his hand a long staff with a steel trident at the end of it; while slung from one shoulder is a bell and a conch shell, and from the other the alms bag. Round his neck is a rosary, composed of the rough spherical seeds of the rudráksha tree; and altogether he is a person not easily to be mistaken. He has his constituents in various quarters, whom he visits in turn, according to their number and his own particular need or fancy. On coming to a house, he stands and rings his bell to call attention to his

presence, at the same time shouting out the words Mahádéva shembó (names of Siva). Then standing with his trident staff planted upright by his side, he begins to sing a snatch of some song, according to the attention that may be paid to him. On receiving a dole, he blows a long blast on his conch shell and then takes his departure. The conch is held sacred to Siva, who is supposed to enjoy the peculiar sound made by blowing through it. I give some specimens of the songs thus sung. They are taken from the Telugu language. I have attempted to preserve the ideas, though I have somewhat altered their form. There is a pessimistic ring about them. The Jangams are pure pessimists. The words Siva, Siva, appear to be used as mere expletives. The songs are as follows :—

A SONG OF DESPAIR.

"This body with all its poor deeds is but vain,
It but lingers a time here alone:
A mere acting puppet 'tis seen for a day;
But at night it has perished and gone.

Refrain.—Trust not in the flesh.
Do not trust it.
Oh Siva! Siva!
Do not trust it.

Their hopes are all vain, 'tis all fruitless I know,
Who contentment and joy ever crave.
Though wealth without measure one has to his store,
He must leave it and sink in the grave.

Trust not in the flesh, etc.

We live in the midst of our lov'd ones who may
Perchance linger around us for years;
Yet when the dread messenger calls us away,
Then alone we must leave them with tears.

Trust not in the flesh, etc.

Fond ties of affection, the sweet thoughts of love,
Are but wretchedness, sorrow and woe.
Death takes the fond wife, he spares not the loved child,
And our tears must eternally flow.

Trust not in the flesh, etc.

The soul that ne'er ponders on Siva's great name,
Is but hopeless and worthless and dead.
All else is but vanity, mere empty show,
Such a life is one long weary dread.

Trust not in the flesh, etc."

A SONG OF MEDITATION.

"What wast thou then before thy birth?
Why grieve at life's each smart:
Enough, thou know'st the Saviour's name,
Serve him with all thy heart.

Refrain.—Why murmur, O my soul at death,
We each must feel his dart.
Alone into the world we came,
Alone we must depart.

Though one may wander like the crow,
He can but meet his fate:
Seek Siva, trust to his strong arm,
And thus find heaven's bright gate.

Why murmur, O my soul, etc.

When thou'st attained the Yogi's power,
And quit of life's vain show,
The narrow way to heaven is found:
Unaided thou canst go.

Why murmur, O my soul, etc.

The flesh and all its ties are vain,
There's nought in life sublime;
Nor can we look for help from man,
In seeking the divine.

Why murmur, O my soul, etc."

Another class of religious mendicants is that of the Sátánis, who, amongst the Vaishnavas, are what the

Jangamas are among the Saivas. This sect was founded by Chaitanya in the 15th century, and originally its adherents were of all castes. Now, however, in the northern parts of the Madras Presidency, at least, Sátánis are all Sudras. They worship Krishna, whom they hold to be the supreme God. A large number of this sect are minstrels, or mendicants. Like the Jangam the Sátáni should be clean shaven. On his face and on various portions of his person he is adorned with the trident-shaped mark of Vishnu. On his shoulder he carries a guitar-shaped instrument, having four wire strings. On this he strums as he goes along and with it also he accompanies his songs. He has a pumkin-shaped vessel to receive his doles, which he transfers to a cloth when the vessel is full. This vessel is adorned with the religious marks of Vishnu. He begs from all conditions of people and from all castes except the Panchamas. When he arrives in front of a house where he expects alms, he shouts out "adoration to the most excellent Rámánuja" (Shri maté Rámánujáya namah), and then begins to sing one of his songs of which I give a translation of a few specimens. In the first of these, Vishnu is called the saviour of the elephant in allusion to a story in the eighth book of the "Bhágavatam." An elephant was bathing in a tank, when it was attacked by a crocodile which would have killed it had not Vishnu or Hari come to its relief.

A MEDITATION ON VISHNU.

"My soul, full satisfaction seek,
Engage thyself in this;
Go, meditate on Hari's feet,
Make this thy chiefest bliss.

Refrain:—My soul, why settest thou thyself
On things that are but vain;
The saviour of the elephant
Thy highest love doth claim.

My soul, know death is ever near,
E'er ready to destroy:
On him, the great in excellence,
Thy heart and mind employ.
My soul, why settest, etc.

My soul, why spendest thou thyself,
On children, wife, or wealth:
Shri Vishnu serve and thus attain
To joy of soul and health.
My soul, why settest, etc.

My soul, consider him who reigns,
At Kanchi's mountain home,
Whose wives Bhudevi, Shridevi,
Share his great golden throne.
My soul, why settest, etc.

The next is a hymn in praise of Ráma. It is as follows:—

PRAISE TO RAMA.

Thou parent of Brahma,
Thou glorious Sri Ráma,
Thy greatness what mortal can tell.

Attend and be gracious,
I'll tell forth thy praises,
Thy glory what mortal can tell.

Who slew foul Máricha,
And saved Vishvámitra,
Thy prowess what mortal can tell.

Who brake the bow hara,
And thus gained sweet Sita,
Thy vigour what mortal can tell.

Who spared Kákásura,
When pleading for mercy,
Thy kindness what mortal can tell.

Who e'er bestows bounty,
On those who seek from thee,
Thy goodness what mortal can tell.

Thou friend of the friendless,
Grant help to me helpless,
Thy pity what mortal can tell.

The various allusions in it may be briefly explained. They are stories to be found in the "Ramáyana." Márícha was a malevolent being (Rákshasa), son of Tátaka. He and his brother Subáhu impishly interfered with a Rishi named Vishvámitra and prevented his performance of a sacrifice. Being unable to endure this interference, and, at the same time, powerless to prevent it, the Rishi appealed to Ráma for assistance. Ráma came and destroyed the two brothers with two arrows. Subáhu was slain with a fire arrow; and Márícha being struck with a wind arrow fell into the sea. In order to express his gratitude for this deliverance, Vishvámitra told Ráma of a certain king named Janaka, who had promised to give his daughter Sita to wife to anyone strong enough to break a certain bow named hara or harathanassu. Ráma accompanied by Vishvámitra went to the king and succeeded in performing the required test and thus won his wife Sita.

When Ráma was banished from his father's home into the eternal forest, he was accompanied by his wife Sita and his brother Lakshmana. One day whilst the three were thus living in the forest, near a mountain called Chitrakúta (a mountain in Bundelkhand), Ráma lay sleeping with his head in Sita's lap. A demon crow (rákshasa), named Kákásura, seeing the bare foot of Sita, and thinking from its red colour that it was meat, came near and bit the foot so that the blood began to flow.[1] At the cries of Sita, Ráma awoke and, on seeing the bleeding wound, he ascertained what had been done. The enraged husband then made an arrow of a blade of grass, and shot it from his bow at the demon crow which was sitting on a tree near by. This blade of grass became an arrow of fire and followed the crow wherever it flew, no matter in what direction it went. At length Kákásura, being

[1] Red is the beauty colour amongst Hindus.

unable to bear the persecution any longer, flew to Ráma and craved pardon. This was granted on condition that the culprit should lose one eye by way of punishment. To this Kákásura consented, whereupon his life was spared; but he lost an eye.

Another well-known religious mendicant is the Dásari, or Pariah priest. This functionary is the one who performs all religious ceremonies for the Pariahs. He officiates at their marriages and funerals, at their celebrations for the dead, and all other such ceremonies. He is also physician, astrologer, and soothsayer; and is a very important man. He receives fees for his services, but he also lives by begging. From the fact that he begs from all castes, and so from those who do not need his official services, he must be classed as a mendicant. He is a Vaishnava by religion, and he wears the trident-shaped mark of Vishnu on his forehead, and also on his shoulders, neck and stomach. His face and upper lip are clean shaven. He carries on his shoulder a guitar-shaped native instrument, having three wire strings, and on this he strums as he goes along, and with this he accompanies his songs. He carries either on his head or on his shoulder, or fastened round his waist, a large fluted brass or copper vessel which is used for collecting alms. This vessel, as well as the musical instrument, is ornamented with the trident-shaped marks. He carries in his hand a pair of wooden castanets, or a pair of small bell-metal cymbals with which he beats time as he sings. He is generally a jovial, merry fellow, of goodly condition as to his body. He is quite the reverse, in this respect, of the pessimistic Jangam. He looks on the bright side of things and he is a very popular visitor, for people enjoy listening to the merry fellow's songs. As he comes into a village, or near a house where he expects a dole, he will break into a song. The refrain is sung at the commencement of the

song, and also at the end of each verse. The whole song of which one Srinavas is said to be the author, is supposed to be a divine meditation of the author upon his god Krishna:—

DIVINE MEDITATION.

"O thou in whom all things do move,
Thou beauteous being divine,
Thou refuge of all in distress,
Thine ear to my sorrows incline.

Refrain:—Thou lord of the Sages all hail!
Thou dweller on Yedus vast height.
Thou great purifier all hail!
To thee goodness is e'er a delight.

Thou lovest me is it not so?
Thy mercy I'll evermore crave:
I love thee, too, that thou dost know,
Stretch forth thy right hand and now save.
Thou lord of the Sages, etc.

Thou friend of the one great supreme,
Thine anger I ever would flee:
I call to thee, deaf thou dost seem,
In love do thou turn unto me.
Thou lord of the Sages, etc.

In greatness thy name doth excel,
Thy speech is as nectar to me:
Oh stay of thy slave Srinivas,
To thee, favoured of Vishnu, I flee.
Thou lord of the Sages, etc."

On coming in front of a dwelling where he expects to receive alms, the Dásari will strike up a song in praise of Vishnu, who is also known as Náráyana. This term is also sometimes used as an appellation of the great supreme (Paraméshvara). The author of this hymn is supposed to be one Venkatadas:—

A HYMN TO VISHNU.

"Much fasting I cannot sustain.
Meditation and prayer I neglect,
I feeble and worthy of blame,
Would share in thy bounty and grace.

Refrain :—Nárâyana! Nárâyana! the nectar of thy name,
To me is life, to me is health, to me is more than all:
Thou lotus-eyed, creator thou, thou most beneficent,
Be gracious now, attend my prayer, yea hear me when I call.

I practise not giving of alms,
Know nothing of thy divine ways:
Oh! look upon me, thy poor slave,
And aid me to bask in thy rays.
Nárâyana! Nárâyana! etc.

Oh refuge of Venkatadâs,
Great spirit of wisdom and grace,
Enthroned on thy lotus attend,
Grant me to behold thy lov'd face.
Nárâyana! Nárâyana! etc."

On receiving his dole, the Dásari will pronounce a blessing upon the giver in some such words as the following :—

"Wealth, gold, and other riches in abundance; abundance of children and grandchildren; long life, health, and prosperity be to thee. My blessing is Brahma's blessing, by the mercy of the all-bountiful may you have prosperity in abundance."

The Dásari, and the Pánchángam Brahmin are much sought after, on account of their skill in settling which are good or bad times for any particular event, such as a marriage or a journey, to take place.

The calculation seems to be made in the following manner. There are twenty-seven stars which are supposed to guide the affairs of mankind. There is a rule by which certain letters of the alphabet and combina-

tions thereof are attached to certain stars, and this is the starting point in these predictions. Suppose a man is about to start on an important journey and wishes to know when he should set out. On going to a Dásari, he will be asked his name. Suppose the name to be Venkayya, the first combination of this name being ve, and, that being attached to the star Mrugashira, calculations are made with the help of the almanack, as to the position of that star with reference to the planetary system generally, and in this way a conclusion is arrived at as to a certain particular period of time—an hour, or a day, or a week, or a year, as the case may be—being favourable or otherwise. The amount of the fee to be paid depends, to a certain extent, upon the nature and importance of the event contemplated.

The fourth stage of a Brahmin's life is that of the Sániyási, during which he is supposed to leave his home and family and live entirely by alms. He should shave off his sikha or topknot, and discard his sacred thread; and, going forth as an empty-handed mendicant, live a life of hardship and self-denial for the remainder of his days.

> "Only once a day let him demand food, let him not habituate himself to eat much at a time; for an anchorite habituated to eat much becomes inclined to sensual gratifications.
>
> At the time when the smoke of the kitchen fires has ceased, when the pestle lies motionless, when the burning charcoal is extinguished, when people have eaten, and when dishes are removed, that is, late in the day, let the Saniyasi always beg food." (Manu, vi. 55-6.)

Very few now adopt this mode of life; and those who do are mostly to be found at Benares and other Hindu holy places. The chief Gurus (Superiors) of the three great sects, who follow respectively the Dvaita, Advaita and Visishtadvaita schools of philosophy, must be Saniyásis; only instead of leading a wandering life, they reside at the chief seats of theological power.

Though they subsist by the alms of the faithful, their revenues are in reality very large indeed. From time to time they go on tour in great state, with elephants and horses, to confirm the faithful, to decide upon religious matters and to receive alms. Personally, these great Gurus are said to live as Saniyásis should do, in great simplicity of life and habits.

Besides the great Orders of religious mendicants, of which those I have named may be taken as samples, there are large numbers of professional beggars who travel about the country, adopting various devices to attract the attention of the people and to extract alms for themselves. A small group of men, usually of the cowherd caste, having with them several trained bulls may often be seen. The bulls are dressed up in a fantastic manner and have been taught to dance, and to bow their heads, as if in assent to anything said to them, and to place their feet upon their masters, and to perform various other tricks. The men have musical instruments and drums, and are themselves clothed in a grotesque manner. These are very sturdy beggars and, when they receive anything, the givers may be licked by the bull as a blessing for the gift. There are also the snake-charmers, the trained bear-leaders, and the trained monkey-men, who travel up and down the country begging. They are also professional story-tellers. The story-tellers in the parts of India I know about, amongst other stories, tell that of Bussy and his wars with the English. Some people go about with a sort of portable puppet-show and flog themselves with a kind of scourge, until the blood flows; all to excite pity or admiration and to get alms. Some go about with a small double drum, shaped like a large hour-glass, which is sounded very rapidly by a quick turn of the wrist, which brings a hard knotted cord to bear upon the parchment at both ends. They also add to their accomplishments by barking like a dog.

Numberless, indeed, are the devices of the lazy rogues to get a comfortable livelihood without hard labour. The indiscriminate giving of alms is an outgrowth of the religious system which enjoins giving for the mere asking, and that to one and all whether orthodox or heterodox. This is carried to such an extreme that it is meritorious to feed animals of various kinds and even to cast a handful of broken grain to the ants.

"Gifts must be made by each housekeeper, as far as he has ability, to religious mendicants, though heterodox; and a just portion must be reserved, without inconvenience to his family, for all sentient beings, animal and vegetable." (Manu, iv. 32.)

Connected with the subject of mendicity is that of satrams or choultries and of sheds erected in the hot season for the giving of water or butter-milk to the poor and thirsty wayfarer. There is no town and scarcely any large village, which has not some kind of satram, erected by charity. This is sometimes done by an individual, and sometimes by a group of persons, or perhaps by a whole village, in order to accommodate travellers. In a country where there are no inns or hotels, these form excellent substitutes; and, considering the habits of the natives, they are more suitable than anything European could be. So useful indeed are these places, that Government and public bodies like Municipalities sometimes either build them themselves, or assist by grants in the building of them. These satrams are of two kinds, those which are merely for lodging, leaving the visitors to provide for themselves; and those which, in addition to lodging, provide food gratis to the needy traveller. It is this which brings the satrams within the subject of mendicity.

Many of these institutions have endowments of lands attached to them, which often yield a large income. A large choultry may have different divisions for different castes, whilst others may be only for one particular caste. It is only poor travellers who receive their food

gratis; the well-to-do provide for themselves, though they gladly make use of the accommodation provided. It is considered very meritorious to build or endow a choultry.

On the occasion of marriages, funerals, ceremonies for the dead and various other occasions, food is distributed to Brahmins and to the poor, according to the ability of the giver. It is these things which cause such occasions as marriages and funerals to be so great a source of debt, with all its kindred troubles; but custom and the rules of religion are so strong that few, if any, dare to disregard them.

It would be impossible to legislate against mendicity in India, in the present condition of the country; nor would it be wise, or beneficial to attempt to do so, until something could be devised to better meet the wants of the truly indigent and helpless, of whom there are large numbers. It is the abuse of charity that I deprecate and not charity itself.

If a proper computation could be made, it would, I believe, show that a very large section of the people live directly or indirectly upon so-called charity; and considering that the Hindus are, as a people comparatively poor, this must be a heavy tax upon the industrious portion of the community. This is not the only evil caused by such widespread mendicity, for its effects upon the morals of the mendicants themselves, as well as public manners generally, cannot but be most deplorable.[1] Charity in itself is a grace that, in its true and righteous exercise, not only confers benefits but brings a reflex good. This cannot, however, be said of mere

[1] "The Fakir group is in a great measure free from the bonds of caste, it offers a refuge to the lazy and immoral members of the community, who have been expelled from their own caste, or desire to shirk the rules which the brethren enforce. The mendicant Vaishnavas of Bengal supply an example of a so-called religious profession degraded by debauchery and self-indulgence."—Crooke, "Natives of Northern India," p. 123.

giving, as such, apart from the worthiness either of the object or the motives impelling the giver. If it is done merely with a desire to obtain merit for oneself, or to receive a *quid pro quo* in the shape of pardon for sin, or a better position in a future birth, it lacks the very essence of true charity. However, many Hindus are truly charitable,[1] in the best sense of the word; for true benevolence is not confined within any bounds, national or religious; but so far as my reading and observation enable me to form an opinion on the matter, the general teaching and practice of Hinduism, as regards charity, do not seem to be in accordance with the spirit of true beneficence. How different it is from the teaching of Christianity, the following quotations show :—

"As we have opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith." (Gal. vi. 10.)

"For we hear there are some which walk amongst you disorderly, working not at all, but are busy bodies. Now them that are such we command and exhort by our Lord Jesus Christ that with quietness they work and eat their own bread." (2 Thess. iii. 11-12.)

"Let him labour working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth." (Eph. vi. 28.)

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[1] "No peasantry in the world with equally scanty resources are more charitable than the Hindus, and even at the meanest hut the beggar's demand for a little cake or a handful of grain is never disregarded." Crooke, "Natives of Northern India," p. 123.



WIDOW.

CHAPTER XII.

HINDU FUNERALS.

उत्तरक्रिय. (Uttara Kriya).

"Single is each man born; single he dies; single he receives the reward of his good, and single the punishment of his evil deeds.

When he leaves his corpse, like a log or a lump of clay, on the ground, his kindred retire with averted faces; but his virtue accompanies his soul." (Manu, iv. 240—1.)

"A mansion with bones for its rafters and beams; with nerves and tendons for cords; with muscles and blood for mortar; with skin for its outward covering.

A mansion infested by age and by sorrow, the seat of malady, and harassed by pains, haunted with the quality of darkness, and incapable of standing long; such a mansion of the vital soul let its occupier always cheerfully quit.

As a tree leaves the bank of a river, when it falls in, or as a bird leaves the branch of a tree at his pleasure, thus he, who leaves his body by necessity or by legal choice, is delivered from the ravening shark, or crocodile, of the world." (Manu, vi. 76—8.)

THERE is a curious passage in Manu where the question seems to be raised as to how death can have any power over such holy beings as Brahmins, especially those learned in the Védas, and who undeviatingly perform the duties laid down for their guidance. A reason is given for the mortality of a twice-born who may have been remiss in performing religious rites, or has offended in the matter of diet. There is nothing

said as to the possible immortality of one who does not deviate from the rules and the regulations laid down for his guidance. The fifth chapter of "Mánava Dharma Sástra," which opens with the passage referred to, is largely composed of the most minute rules and regulations as to diet. It is difficult to conceive the possibility of a mortal man's avoiding some offence named and thus rendering himself amenable to death. The passage is as follows:—

"The sages, having heard those laws delivered for the conduct of house-keepers, thus addressed the high-minded Bhrigu, who proceeded in a former birth from the genius of fire,

'How, Lord, can death prevail over Bráhmins, who know the scriptural ordinances, and perform their duties as they have been declared?'

Then he, whose disposition was perfect virtue, even Bhrigu, the son of Manu, thus answered the great Rishis:—'Hear, from what sin proceeds the inclination of death to destroy the chief of the twice-born,'

Through a neglect of reading the Véda, through a desertion of approved usages, through supine remissness in performing holy rites, and through various offences in diet, the genius of death becomes eager to destroy them." (Manu, v. 1—4.)

Amongst Hindus of all castes and of both sexes, when a person is at the point of death, the family priest is summoned to administer the last sacrament (jívanamaskáram) which is administered in the following manner. The sick person is lifted from the couch upon which he may be lying, and is made to recline upon the ground, supported by a low stool. A couch is not considered a pure place (madi), and the friends of a sick man will not even feed him whilst lying on it, unless he is too ill to be moved. For the purpose of taking food he must be lifted from off the couch and made to sit on the ground. The priest then approaches with the panchagavyam, which may be called the sacramental elements. This consists of a mixture composed of the five products of the cow—milk, curds, butter,

urine and dung. The dying person is first asked to recite after the priest certain mantrams and, if he is too weak to articulate, he is desired to recite them to himself. Afterwards the vessel containing the nauseous mixture is placed to his lips and some of it is poured into the mouth. This whole ceremony is called práyaschittam, or the ceremony of expiation. Of the various texts recited, two are given below as specimens:—

ज्ञानाज्ञानकृतदोषप्रायश्चित्तार्थं पंचगव्यसंस्कारं करिष्ये ॥

"I take this sacrament of panchagavyam for the absolution of my sins, both those committed voluntarily and involuntarily."

यत्वगस्थिगतं पापं देहे तिष्ठति मामके ।
प्राशनं पंचगव्यस्य दहत्यग्निरिवेन्धनं ॥

"Whatever sins adhere to the skin and bone
Now present in this my body,
May the partaking of this panchagavyam
Destroy them as fire destroys fuel."

The sick person is then replaced upon the couch to await the end though sometimes he may recover. If from sudden death or any other cause, this ceremony cannot be performed, the death is not considered a happy one. Such cases seem to be provided for in the mantrams that are said at the commemorative ceremonies for the dead.

When it is evident that death is very near, the dying person is laid on the ground, which has been previously prepared by smearing it with cowdung and by placing some of the sacred grass (darbha) on it. It is very important that a person should breathe his last on the earth. Indeed, it is a common way of cursing to say, "When you come to die may there be no one to place you on the ground."

There are certain phases of the moon during which it would be considered a serious calamity for anyone

to die inside the house.[1] Should death draw near at such a period, the patient is carefully carried outside to die in some outer verandah.[2] If, through any misfortune, he should die inside the house during such a period, the whole dwelling is considered polluted. It must be entirely vacated for some time, after which a ceremony called punyáchavachanam is performed in the place to purify it before it can be re-occupied. Sometimes when such a calamity does befall a household, in order to avoid the trouble and cost of moving out entirely, a hole is made in the side-wall of the house, near the room where the death took place, and the body is passed outside through the hole. In such a case, only that side of the house will be impure and need purification; the other part can be inhabited as usual. This mode of action, however, is not considered proper or respectable and it is thought to reflect dishonour upon the dead.

The wailing of eastern women is proverbial, but it must be witnessed or heard to be fully understood. The men are quiet in their grief, for it is not considered seemly for a man to weep and wail; but the females abandon themselves completely to their sorrow and their lamentations are both loud and long. They tear their hair, beat their foreheads and roll their bodies about as if in great agony, when they give utterance to their sorrow for the dead. I know of

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[1] *Ante*, p. 25.

[2] "When an orthodox Hindu is at the point of death, a Brahman brings a cow, marks its forehead with vermilion and salutes it. A little Ganges water is poured into the mouth of the dying man; alms are given to Brahmans and to beggars; and just at the moment of dissolution he is removed into the open air or conveyed to the river-bank. The object is, first, that the house may be free from pollution; secondly, that in the open air the soul may have free exit from the body; and thirdly, that resting on the ground or in a holy place, it may be safe from the attacks of evil spirits. Such spirits cannot rest upon the ground."—Crooke, "Natives of Northern India," p. 216.

nothing more heart-rending than to witness such a giving way to grief.

As soon as death has taken place, a light is put at the head of the body and preparations are at once made for the funeral. The chief person present at it is the near relative, who has to perform the necessary rites, and who is called the karma karta or the one who acts. This is the eldest son, if there is one who is old enough to have received upanayanam. Failing such a son, the ceremonies are performed by the following persons: if the dead person is a woman, her husband; if a man, his father; if the father is dead, the next brother and so on in order of nearest relationship.

Hitherto, all I have written applies both to those who burn and to those who bury their dead. Both modes are in use amongst Hindus. I shall now describe in fuller detail, first, the case of those who burn and, secondly, that of those who bury the dead.

Usually only a few hours elapse after death before the funeral takes place; but there is no fixed rule on this point; it seems to depend on circumstances. The dead body is now washed and adorned with the pundrams, sacred marks, and then, clothed in one long cloth only, it is put in a sitting posture, leaning against the wall, the head alone being uncovered. The karta now performs a hómam sacrifice in front of the dead. The fire for the hómam is brought from the house fire, and the sacrifice consists of dropping into it ghee, rice, and the green twigs of the ravi or peepul tree. Mantrams like this are repeated the while:—

प्राङ्मुखाग्ने । मम । अभिमुखो । भव । सुमुखो । भव ।
सुप्रसन्नो । भव । यथोक्त जिह्वया । हविर्गृहाण ॥

"O fire do thou turn towards me; look kindly towards me; have favour upon me; with thy seven tongues (spoken of in the Védas), graciously partake of my offering."

After the hómam, the body, enveloped in a new white cloth, is placed upon the bier. The bier is a hastily formed construction of two long poles, usually bamboos, with seven pieces of wood tied across. It is said that seven cross pieces are used to represent the seven upper worlds. Some of the fire from the hómam is placed in a new earthen pot, to be carried in the procession by the chief mourner. The body, wrapped in the new cloth and fastened to the bier, has the two thumbs, and the two great toes also tied together with cords. The bier is carried by several of the relatives, or at least by persons of the same caste. It would be considered pollution for a person of any other caste to assist in this office, for it is said :—

> "Let no kinsman, whilst any of his own class are at hand, cause a deceased Brahmin to be carried out by a Sudra; since the funeral rite, polluted by the touch of a servile man, obstructs his passage to heaven." (Manu v. 104.)

There is an expression used to one another amongst Hindus—"You will soon ascend a palanquin carried by bearers of your own caste," meaning "you will soon die." "The corpse is carried away feet foremost so that the ghost may find its way back to the house."[1]

The procession consists of a few of the friends, sometimes even females, with the men carrying the bier and the chief mourner, or karta, carrying the pot of fire. Where music is employed, the musicians playing their wild music also form part of the procession. Those who bury their dead always have music; those who cremate have it sometimes, though it appears in such cases to be unlawful, or at least irregular. On the way to the cemetery the procession is stopped three times, and the bier is placed on the ground. The face is then uncovered and a mantram is said. This is done from the fear that, owing to the speedy funeral,

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[1] Crooke, "Natives of Northern India," p. 217.

the person may not be really dead after all. The mantram used is this:—

ओं जीव पुनरागच्छसिवा ॥

"O spirit! hast thou returned?"

The cemetery (shmashánam) is a vacant spot set apart for this purpose, usually situated to the north-east of the town or village. It is generally a mere waste, barren, neglected spot with nothing to distinguish it from any other waste, except here and there a few blackened patches, from the recent or more ancient fires. These blackened places and a few broken pots are generally all there is to mark the Hindu "God's acre." The burying places are, as a rule, kept in a state of utter neglect; though sometimes, if private property, they may be planted with trees and kept nice.

In villages, in the case of poor people, each householder gives a little fuel to help to form the funeral pile. This is collected by the vettian who splits the wood and prepares the pyre. He is a kind of public messenger and low official drudge attached to each village. He is always a Pariah. He generally holds a small piece of land which, with certain fees, forms his remuneration. For funerals, part of his fee is the cloth wound round the corpse and the sticks of which the bier is made.

On arriving at the spot the bier is set down, and the body is put on the pile. The cloth in which it was wrapped is then taken off. Any jewels in the ears or elsewhere, the sacred thread and the waist cord are also removed. The body must be completely naked. As it came into the world so it must depart. The corpse is laid on the pile with its head towards the south and its legs to the north.[1] It is placed on its back, but the face is slightly turned towards the east.

[1] In some parts, the body is laid with its head facing the Himálayas. See Crooke's "Natives of Northern India," p. 217.

The karta now performs the pradakshina ceremony. He takes an earthen pot full of water and makes a small hole in the bottom of it from which the water slowly trickles out. With his hair all hanging down his back he takes the pot of water on to his shoulder and, as the water slowly runs out, he walks round the pile, having his right shoulder towards it. This is done three times. Before the second round, a second hole is made in the pot; and in like manner a third hole is made before the third round. After the three circumambulations, he throws the pot over his head behind him and dashes it to pieces. This is supposed to assuage the thirst of the préta (disembodied spirit) during the fiery ordeal.

The karta now performs a hómam sacrifice and then, taking some of the sacred fire, applies it to the right side, breasts and shoulders of the body as it lies on the pile. Then the supreme moment arrives when, taking some of the sanctified fire, he applies it to the pile, near the head of the body and sets it all alight, during which time the priest repeats mantrams of which the following are specimens:—

प्रेतोपासनात् उल्मुकानादाय चितेहि पुरस्तात दक्षिणमुख-
स्थिष्ठन् प्रेतस्य दक्षिणवक्षसि स्तनयोरुपरि भुजमूलेनिदधाति ।

After performing the préta hómam, he (the karta), takes brands (from the hómam), and standing with his face towards the south, places a brand on the right side, breasts, and shoulders (of the corpse).

मिनामग्निविदा होमाभिषेको मस्याद्वाचं चिल्कषि पोमाशरीरं ॥

"O fire do not regret that thou art consuming this dead one. Do not sorrow whilst thou art consuming his skin and his whole body."

After setting fire to the pile the mourners sit somewhat apart, whilst those who carried the bier stay near to adjust the fire, until the skull is heard to burst.

"The mourner then pours water upon it to cool the ghost."[1] The karta is then shaved by the barber. After this he bathes. His head and face must be completely shaved, except the sacred top-knot; but should the deceased be younger than he is, this shaving is put off until the tenth day.

The chief mourner now returns to the house with his friends, but they do not enter it. They simply go there to get the materials for the nitya karma sacrifice, which must now take place, and before doing of which the karta should not re-enter the dwelling. If it should be dark before the karta arrives, the nitya karma ceremony does not take place until the following morning. This ceremony can never be done after darkness has set in. The karta, accompanied by the puróhita and any relatives or friends, now takes some fire and fuel, rice, ghee, curds and pulse for a sacrifice. He also receives from the puróhita, a small round stone called préta shila, which, when the consecration ceremony is performed with reference to it, is supposed to become the personification of the disembodied spirit of the deceased.[2] This stone the karta ties up in a strip of cloth previously torn from the winding sheet of the deceased. This strip of cloth he wears over the right shoulder, during the performance of the nitya karma ceremonies for the ensuing ten days. During all these ceremonies this stone is honoured and treated as though it were really the spirit of the dead.

[1] Crooke, "Natives of Northern India," p. 218.

[2] "The Hindu believes that when the soul leaves the body it assumes the shape of a little 'feeble mannikin,' exposed to injuries of all kinds. In order to protect it, it is necessary to furnish it with a sort of intermediate body, interposed, as it were, between the gross body which has been destroyed by fire and the new body which under the law of metempsychosis it will by and by assume. If it be not furnished with this intermediate body it will wander about in the form of a préta or evil spirit. The rites by which the body is prepared are known as sráddha. They usually last ten days." Crooke, "Natives of Northern India," p. 218.

The party then proceed to a special place, outside the town or village, where such funeral rites are performed. This place is usually a well, or is near a tank, or river, and is used only for this particular purpose. On arriving at the place in question, the karta proceeds to bathe and then to cook the food which he has brought. The préta shila is then placed into a little receptacle formed for it of leaves and is then consecrated by the repetition of mantrams. A small portion of the cooked food is now waved before the stone as an offering. This is to appease the hunger of the préta, just as water, which is poured over it, is supposed to appease its thirst. After this the remainder of the cooked food is scattered to different sides, and thirty-two different mantrams are repeated, calling upon the crows and kites to come and devour what is thus scattered. The mantrams are appeals to the disembodied spirit, in the shape of the various kinds of birds, to come and partake of the food thus provided. All this is repeated every morning for ten days. The following is a specimen of the texts thus said:—

गृध्रवायसमुखेन प्रेतो भुज्यतां ॥

"May this préta enjoy this food by means of the mouths of these kites and crows."

When this ceremony is over, the scattered food is eaten by the kites and crows which fly around in expectation of the feast.

After all this is finished the party return home. On entering the house, the karta must purify his eyes before looking upon any of the household, by fixing them upon the light which has been placed on the spot where the deceased last lay. He then gets a pot of water which he suspends from a beam over the same place, that is, where the dead breathed his last. A small hole is made in the bottom of this pot, and the water is allowed slowly to drip on to the ground near

the place where the head lay. Some earth is also put there in which nine different kinds of grain have been mixed. The pot is left there for the ten days of the nitya karma, in order to quench the thirst of the spirit which is thought to still hover near the spot. From the time of the death up to this moment no food has been cooked in the house; but now a meal is prepared, a small portion of which is carefully placed near to the dripping water for the refreshment of the disembodied spirit. This food is renewed and placed there daily during the ten days of the nitya karma ceremonies. This act ends the ceremonies of the funeral day itself, but not all the ceremonies for the dead.

On some one day of the ten during which the nitya karma rites are performed, there is a ceremony called sanchanam (collecting). This takes place usually on the fourth day, and it is performed at the burning ground. It is different from and additional to the daily rite at the préta place. The karta and the puróhita accompanied by a few friends, and probably a few Brahmins, especially if a fee is given to them for so coming, will proceed to the burning ground, taking with them from the house fire, rice, ghee and curds, with pots for cooking, and also some of the sacred darbha grass. The karta then gathers together some of the pieces of bone that may be left amongst the ashes of the funeral pile. These bones are preserved in a new earthen vessel or urn for a longer or shorter time, after which they are taken and thrown into some sacred river, or buried in an unfrequented place. In the case of wealthy people, who can afford to pay the necessary expenses, it is a very common thing for Brahmins to be employed and well paid to take thi urn (asthipátra) with the calcined bones all the way to Benares, there to be thrown into the sacred Ganges. There is a slókam or verse, which is current amongst the puróhitas and extremely popular, showing the great

benefit which will be derived from the bones being thus cast into the waters of the river Ganges :—

यावदस्थि मनुष्याणां गंगातोयेषु तिष्ठति ।
तावद्वर्षसहस्राणि ब्रह्मलोके महीयते ॥

"How longsoever the bones of a man
Are in the waters of the Ganges;
For so many thousands of years
They will be respected in Brahma lókam."

The rest of the ashes are carefully gathered together, and put aside or buried. The karta now proceeds to prepare a place for cooking the materials he has brought for the purpose. This is done by sprinkling a spot of ground with water and smearing it with the dung of a cow. He then bathes and cooks the food, after which he performs a hómam sacrifice. This being done he, with suitable mantrams, of which a specimen has been given in connection with the nitya karma rites,[1] casts food to the crows and kites which have come there for the meal. This food is called prétáháram or food for the spirit.

On the tenth and final day of the mourning, the near relatives, with the family priest and the karta, assemble at the place where the nitya karma rites are performed for the last important ceremony. The food is cooked and scattered to the birds, with the repeating of mantrams for the last time; after which the chief mourners shave and bathe, so as to be rendered free from defilement. The brass pot in which this food has been cooked for the past ten days, and the préta shila (the small stone), are now thrown into the water by the karta, for they are now done with. This is called shiladhivásam, or placing the stone. The pot is afterwards secured by the puróhita as a fee. After this a hómam is performed by the karta, alms are distributed to attendant Brahmins and all proceed to their homes.

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[1] *Ante*, p. 202.

If the deceased was a married man, it is at this last ceremony that the poor widow is degraded into her state of widowhood. This rite is called sútrachédam or cutting of the cord. I know of nothing in the whole range of Hindu rites and ceremonies that is more saddening than this relic of barbarism; and yet it is still in full active force. As though it were for some fault of hers that death has taken away her husband, she is now to be initiated into that state of degradation and misery which is the lot of the poor Indian widow. No thought of youth or beauty, no bonds of nature or ties of affection can ward off this inevitable curse. The bright and happy life is visited with this dire anathema and the iron rule must be enforced. The relatives and friends of the poor forlorn creature assemble at the house and the victim is adorned for the sacrifice. Her festive raiment is put on, and she is beautified with her jewels, flowers and sweet-smelling sandal paste. The beauty is intensified with rouge and bright pigments, and all is arranged as for a festive day. For a time her loving friends weep with her and embrace her, condoling with her on her fate. After this is over she is taken in a palanquin of some sort and conveyed to the scene of her degrading. When she arrives, her bright clothing and jewels are taken off. Henceforth she must have only one coarse covering; her beautiful long hair, the glory of her womanhood, is cut off and her head is close shaven, as it must evermore thereafter be. The mangalasútram, or marriage token, is cut off and she is now a widow indeed. This cutting off of the marriage cord is always done by a woman, as if to make the ceremony, if possible, the more degrading to her sex. The poor widow is then taken back to her home, ever after to be a drudge and a thing for contempt until the hand of death relieves her of her misery. What wonder is it that so many in contemplation of the lifelong misery

preferred the death of a suttee, and to escape the evil to come gladly ascended the funeral pile. The position of the Hindu widow is one that, for its attendant miseries, and also its temptations to evil, has not perhaps its equal in the world. What wonder is it that, to escape her wretchedness, or to conceal her shame, so many a poor creature is driven to commit suicide. A bitter cry on a pitch-dark night, followed by a heavy splash, as a leap is taken into the clammy depths of some Indian well, a hasty enquiry the next morning followed by a speedy funeral and there is another victim to the written and unwritten man-made codes, which selfishly and cowardly heap the miseries of life upon the frailer being, leaving the stronger one, simply because he is the stronger, to enjoy the kernel and sweets of life whilst her portion is the husks and the bitterness. It must be remembered to the credit of the Tengalai Vaishnavas, unorthodox though they may be, that they refrain from inflicting on their widows the dishonour of shaving the head.

When the widow is a child, not yet arrived at the age to join her husband, the only ceremony is the breaking off of the mangalasútram. The other ceremonies and degradations are reserved to the time when she arrives at full age, and then the whole ceremony is gone through, very much as I have described above. Can anything be more pathetic than the thought of a bright little thing growing up free and happy in her home, unconscious of the fate that lies before her and yet with that destiny fixed, as though engraven with a pen of iron, immutable, certain as death.[1]

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[1] Some of the more cultured and enlightened Hindus, though few in number, feel ashamed of the present barbarous customs. The following striking letter appeared in the *Madras Mail*, August 30, 1907.

INDIAN WIDOW RE-MARRIAGE.

Sir,—All men are allowed to marry any number of times they please; the man who has not got any reasonable probability of living

On the eleventh day there are some ceremonies at the house which include the feeding of Brahmins. On this day too, in times gone by, there was a ceremony called ekávhanam (calling of one) by which a

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for so much as five years may, if he has money and inclination to do so, drag a poor girl whose whole life lies before her, to the altar; but a woman, however young she may be, once a widow, must remain a widow till death. This is the law of the present Hindu Society! But is it just? Is it equitable? That is the grand question before the national mind; and it is not difficult to see which way it shall be decided. We may not decide in favour of widow re-marriage in public writings and public speeches, we dare not give our assent to it in our lives, but when we enter our private chambers, when we see the downcast look of the beloved sister in the prime of her youth doomed to a lifelong widowhood, when we see the beloved daughter of the family withering away in the heyday of life, then few, very few indeed, are there among us who do not curse the hour that gave sanction to this monstrous custom. These are the feelings of mere sympathizers, mere lookers on; what then must be the feelings of the unfortunate sufferers themselves? . . . . . . It is not we but it is the advancing civilization and enlightenment, the changed notions of social duties and responsibilities, the new ideas of the right of man and woman, that call for this reform; and, oppose it as we may, sooner or later it will be accomplished. . . .

The last Census returns brought to light the startling fact that there are no less then twenty-one million Hindu widows in India (and of those 700,000 are child widows), and all know what a Hindu widow means! If she be young and childless, her whole life is a long and weary waste. If an orphan, in eight cases out of ten, she is the menial servant of the family, their sweeper and their cook. Society receives no benefit from her, and is it wise, is it patriotic to allow such a wreckless waste of so many human lives and so much human energy? Many are the cases of infanticide in this country, a few are brought to light and dealt with by the law; and you find no words to express your pity for these helpless and unfortunate creatures, who not only suffer all sorts of social persecution but are severely punished by the Law as well; and in the exuberance of your sympathy for the unfortunate and erring widow you petition the Government to alter the Law relating to infanticide. But why cannot you look the question boldly in the face, and instead of adopting indirect and inefficient means for its solution, at once put a stop to this most heinous custom by cutting it at its most fruitful source. If you do feel for these helpless widows, at once remove this monstrous social disability; allow the widows to re-marry freely, and infanticide will be materially decreased, if not altogether put a stop to in the land. This is the

Brahmin, for a sufficient consideration, took upon himself the sins of the deceased and expiated the same by twenty-one days' seclusion and by repeating numberless times the gáyatrí, with various ceremonies. This now appears to be an obsolete rite; at least it seems never to be performed in the part of India known to me. Instead of it, thirty-two lumps of rice and ghee mixed together are taken and thrown into a pit near to which a hómam sacrifice is made. This is a singular ceremony and reminds us of Jewish rites as prescribed in the Levitical law. This thought is, however, more prominently suggested by another ceremony that is sometimes performed on this day, a ceremony strongly suggestive of the expiatory rite of the scape-goat. A young bull is dedicated by being stamped with the mark of Vishnu's wheel, or the trident of Siva. By this the sins of the deceased are supposed to be transferred to the animal, and it is set free to wander for ever at its own will, as a sacred animal which it is meritorious to feed and care for. Even if such a bull gets into the fields and eats the growing corn, it must not be driven out. One of these huge pampered creatures may often be seen in the bazaars helping itself in a lordly manner from the grain baskets of the merchants. Sometimes a cow-calf is also devoted, and a kind of marriage is performed between the two. Those who cannot afford to give such costly offerings will, on this day, give one or two cloths to the Brahmins. This ceremony of dedicating an animal as a sinbearer is also observed amongst such

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present need of India. Unless our enlightened countrymen put a stop to the most heinous crimes, aforesaid, India will never boast of its social reform. Dutiful sons of India, I appeal to you humbly to take up the cause of social reform and especially to the above-said India's need.

K. Rangasawmy Iyengar.

Conjeeveram, *25th August.*

a primitive tribe as the Tódas of the Nilgiri Hills in Southern India, and amongst such an unorthodox people as the Badagas of the same range of hills.[1]

On the twelfth day, the last of the various funeral ceremonies is performed. It is called the sapindi karanam; but this rite will be described later on when I come to speak of shráddhas.

A few words should be said about mourning, for the Hindu idea of mourning is not conveyed by the English term. To the Hindu it means uncleanness, ceremonial defilement and it is quite apart from the natural sorrow caused to survivors by death. The word used for mourning, in the true Hindu sense, is ashúshi or sútakam, both which words mean ceremonial defilement. The duration of this mourning varies according to the condition of the deceased. In the case of mere infants the time is about one day. In the case of a boy who has not yet been invested with the sacred thread, or of a girl not yet married, the time is three days; and after that, in either case, the proper time is ten days. In the case of a married female, whether she has joined her husband or not, her own parents and brothers and sisters observe this ceremonial mourning for three days. During these periods, the near relatives of the deceased are considered unclean, and their touch would ceremonially defile any person or thing. They must not enter their own kitchen or touch any cooking utensil. The food, during the days of mourning, must be prepared by some one not personally connected with the deceased, although of equal caste. Should they find it impossible, on account of being at a long distance from their own caste people or other reasons, to obtain the services of a proper person to cook for them, they may procure provisions, and temporary cooking

[1] See Chapter XIII under Tódas and Badagas.

utensils, and prepare food for themselves in some place other than the usual kitchen. To enter this sacred place in an impure state would render the stored provisions and everything therein unclean and hence worthless. The mourners do not lie down upon a mattress, as it would be rendered unclean and call for much trouble in purification; they do not put on the coloured portions of the ordinary sacred marks; they refrain from wearing gay-coloured garments and, in various other outward ways, they manifest their defilement. During these days, it is customary to abstain from all kinds of indulgences, as, for instance, tasty food, the use of betel and tobacco or snuff, or any such personal gratifications. When the days of mourning come to an end and the purificatory ceremonial is over, things then go on as usual.

I have now given an account of the ceremonies performed at the funerals of those Hindus who practise cremation, and also of the nitya karma rites performed during the ten days succeeding the death. I proceed to describe some of the chief rites and ceremonies performed in the case of those who bury their dead, and to give some account of the shráddhas, or Hindu ceremonies for deceased ancestors.

The great mass of Hindus are worshippers of fire, in some form or other; indeed, fire worship is one of the earliest cults of India, it being one of the Vedic forms of Nature worship, a deification of the phenomena of nature, which has ever been one of the first forms of departure from the worship of the one true God. As fire worshippers, therefore, the Hindus burn their dead, making that sacred element the vehicle for the destruction of the gross and material form in which the divine element no longer dwells. There are some Hindus, however, who depart from the ordinary orthodox faith, and pay allegiance to earth (prudhivi) as a deity; and who therefore bury their dead instead of

practising cremation. Amongst these are the Lingadharis, those worshippers of Siva who wear the lingam, the emblem of their God, upon their person; but who, although they include Brahmins amongst their number, are not considered orthodox. Indeed this sect is opposed to all the chief Brahminical religious customs, and, as one difference amongst many, they bury instead of burning their dead. The Jangams[1] who are closely allied to the Lingadharis and also the Sátánis,[2] all bury their dead. This is also the case with the section of the Goldsmith and the Weaver caste, who worship the lingam. Those Hindus who bury their dead do not observe the impure days, which are so strictly observed by those who burn the departed.

There are conditions under which those who usually practise cremation dispose of the dead by burial. Sanyasis of every sect are buried, a portion of salt being placed in the grave with the body. The only exception to this is when the body is simply cast into some sacred river. These holy persons are past the stage when ceremonies of any kind are necessary. Amongst the three higher castes, all unmarried girls are buried and all boys who have not undergone the ceremony of initiation into the state of the twice-born.[3] This is a deviation from the law laid down by Manu, who seems to imply that it is only in the cases of children under two years of age that cremation should not be performed. Thus:—

"A dead child under the age of two years, let his kinsmen carry out, having decked him with flowers, and bury him in pure ground without collecting his bones at a future time.

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1 *Ante*, p. 179. 2 *Ante*, p. 182.

3 In the villages "When a child dies it is usually buried under the house threshold, in the belief that, as the parents tread daily over its grave, its soul will be reborn in the family. Their souls do not pass into the ether with the smoke of the pyre, but remain on earth to be reincarnated in the household." Crooke, "Natives of Northern India," p. 202.

Let no ceremony with fire be performed for him, nor that of sprinkling water; but his kindred, having left him like a piece of wood in the forest shall be unclean for three days." (v. 68—9.)

In the case of Sudras, boys and girls are not, as a rule, married so young as in the three upper castes; and the practice amongst them seems to be that unmarried boys and girls, under the age of eight or ten, are buried. There is no exact rule as to the age.

All those who die of small-pox, of whatever sect or caste, are buried at once without any ceremony whatever. This practice probably arose from sanitary reasons, although the common people give a religious reason for it. Some say it is because this disease is caused by Lakshmi, the wife of Vishnu, and, as no sacrifices by fire are made to her, she would be displeased if they burned her victims.

In the case of those who practise cremation, when they lose one of their infant children, it is taken away and buried without any ceremony whatever. They leave it "like a piece of wood in the forest" and it is all over. There are no ceremonies at the time, except that, in some cases, food is cooked near the grave and thrown to the birds for three days; but no mantrams are said and no shráddhas, or periodical observances for the dead are performed. This is the rule, but human nature cannot always be entirely repressed, and it appears to be a common practice for a mother who may have lost a child to give food or presents, once a year, to some little boy or girl of about the same age and condition as her own lost boy or girl.

There is much less ceremony connected with burial than with cremation. Up to the time when the procession leaves the house for the cemetery, the rites are practically the same in both cases, except that there is no hómam or sacrifice by fire. It is here that the

chief differences begin. The body is decked out with flowers and fine clothes; the face is exposed and the sacred marks are daubed on; and, in the case of females, the jewels are also put on. As the body is buried in a sitting posture, the bier has to be made in a peculiar form. The body is placed as though sitting in a kind of open sedan chair, the bier being called anantashayanam or the everlasting couch. Amongst the Lingadharis the bier is borne by any of the sect, regardless of caste distinction. Often the bearers are a mixed number from various castes. There is always music with the procession, and on the way the bier is put down three times and the plaintive question "O spirit hast thou returned" is put to the deceased by the puróhita just as in the case of those who cremate.

On arriving at the cemetery, the grave, usually a very shallow one, is found ready prepared and the ceremonies at once begin. The first thing is to purify the place. This is done by sprinkling the grave and its surroundings with water in which vibuthi[1] has been mixed; at the same time a mantram is repeated by the puróhita. This mantram is one of those quoted in the chapter on Sacred Marks[2] and is an appeal to earth as a deity. The body is then placed in the grave; but before it is put in the clothes and jewels are all taken off, and it is stripped quite bare.

When the body has been placed in the grave, earth is put in about as high as its waist. The karta, or chief mourner, then takes the lingam of the deceased out of its receptacle, which is usually a kind of silver sarcophagus, suspended from the neck, and having bathed and worshipped it, he places it in the left hand of the dead person, where it is allowed to remain, to be buried with the body. The priest then

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[1] *Ante*, p. 78. [2] *Ante*, p. 79.

repeats a mantram, the karta joining in with him, during which he, the karta, takes up a handful of earth and throws it into the grave. This answers to the setting fire to the pile in the case of those who practise cremation. The mantram thus repeated is as follows:—

शिवसायुज्यं गच्छ ।

"Become united with Siva."

It is commonly said that the skull of the deceased person is now broken by a blow given with a cocoanut, in order to facilitate the escape of the soul from the body through the aperture. I am assured, however, by those who bury that this is not the case. In the case of Sanyasis, however, this is actually done, but why I do not know. After the mantram, the friends present also throw in handfuls of earth, and finally they fill up the grave, and raise a low mound over it. In the middle of this mound they form with mud the shape of a lingam, and at each of the four corners a rough model of a bull. The bull is sacred to Siva, as the animal on which he rides. They worship the lingam and the bull and then proceed home, after bathing in a tank or river.

The Lingadharis who wear the sacred thread, before they leave the grave cook some rice, and give it to the cows to eat, if any are near; if not they then throw it into a river or tank. On reaching home they place a lighted lamp on the spot where the deceased breathed his last, and then the chief mourner and the puróhita with several friends, partake of a meal in company. For the ten days succeeding the funeral, the karta with the puróhita and friends proceed daily to the grave for worship. They worship the lingam and the bulls which have been made on the grave, by sprinkling them with vibuthi mixed with water, and by scattering over them flowers and coloured rice, as well as bits of

cocoanut and sugar. At the same time they repeat the thousand names of Siva and various mantrams. On the tenth and final day, the earthen emblems of the lingam and the bulls are levelled on the mound, and thus disappear. Sometimes, if the friends can afford it, they will build a monument over the grave, just as those who burn their dead sometimes do near the place of cremation. They may also have a small bull made of stone, which they place on the grave as a monument. The following is a specimen of the mantrams thus said at the grave on these daily visits; it is said to be taken from the "Skanda Purana":—

विश्वव्यापिमनादिमेकममलं नित्यं परं निष्कलं
नित्याद्दष्टसहस्तपत्रकमलैर्दिव्याक्षतैर्मंडितं ।
नित्यानंदेमनंतरूपखचितं स्वांगेस्फुरन्मामके
सत्यात्मानमणुप्रमाणमिह तं स्वछंदरूपं भजे ॥

"I adore him who fills the universe, who is without beginning,
Solitary, pure, eternal, above all, without parts or passions;
Who is worshipped with thousands of lotus-petals and rice procured by me;
Who, eternally happy, pervades all things, shining in my soul with unbounded beauty;
Whose nature is truth, who being invisible can assume any form, the Supreme God."

When a member of a sect accustomed to burn its dead dies of small-pox and is therefore buried, a curious custom is followed in order to give peace to the spirit of the deceased. Two months after the burial, or sometimes immediately after, the friends take a small branch of the ravi tree[1] or of the zuvvi tree,[2] or of the moduga tree,[3] and treat this bit of stick as though it were the deceased. By virtue of certain mantrams the stick is supposed to become the actual dead body, and it is treated exactly as the body would

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[1] Ficus religiosa. [2] Ficus infectoria. [3] Butea frondosa.

have been had it been cremated. It is bathed and burnt, water and food are offered to the préta (spirit), and all the ceremonies for ten days are gone through, just as would have been the case had the deceased died and been burnt in the ordinary way.

It may be asked what is done in the case of the very poor, or of a stranger who dies. Who then performs the funeral ceremonies, and the burning or burying? This is not done by the public authorities as in Europe. Hinduism has provided for the emergency in another way. On the occasion of a death, not only is the whole household ceremonially impure, but the immediate neighbours, also, are unclean until the dead body is removed. Under such circumstances, as no food can be cooked or eaten, the neighbours are forced to attend to the matter, though perhaps the ceremonies are not performed as minutely or carefully as usual.

The ancient lawgivers have also provided for various emergencies that may arise; for instance, in the case of a soldier's dying in battle it would be impossible for all the ceremonies to be gone through, and so there is a special rule to provide for such a contingency:—

"By a soldier discharging the duties of his class, and slain in the field with brandished weapons, the highest sacrifice is, in that instant, complete; and so is his purification. This law is fixed." (Manu, v. 78.)

I have described how those who practise cremation devote a young bull as a scape-goat; those who bury their dead never do this, but they sometimes give a cow with its calf to the priest, just as those who cremate do. This gift is called gódánam, or the cow offering.

I now come to deal with the most important subject of shráddhas, or periodical ceremonies for deceased ancestors. Those who practise cremation are the more minute in their ancestral worship rites; but those who bury have some ceremonies of the kind, though

differing in detail and in degree. A learned Hindu professor has said that: "Ancestor worship, in some form or other, is the beginning, the middle, and the end of what is known as the Hindu religion."[1] The object of the Hindu shráddhas is to assist the departed spirit in the various experiences it will have to pass through. At the same time, the one who duly performs these rites and ceremonies thereby lays up merit for himself and his family, which merit will be duly carried to the credit of his account hereafter.

The first of these ceremonies is the nitya karma, the object of which is to provide the departed spirit with an intermediate body. The spirit at death leaves its former dwelling place in an amorphous, invisible form, about the size of one's thumb. This is called a préta, and were it not for the prescribed ceremonies, this spirit would simply wander about for ever as an impure ghost or goblin amongst kindred demons and departed evil spirits. By means of the nitya karma rites the préta is furnished with an intermediate kind of body which enables it to feel the sensations of happiness or misery, and thus be in a position to undergo the punishment, or enjoy the good that may be its due.[2]

On the twelfth day after the death there must be the ceremony called sapindi karanam. In some places, this ceremony is performed on the eleventh day; but, as far as I can gather, it is always done on the twelfth day in South India. On the morning of the day in question, there is a large gathering of Brahmins and friends and relatives at the house of the deceased. It is supposed that whatever nourishes the Brahmins fed on these occasions, who represent the departed spirits, also nourishes and helps the spirits

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[1] Professor Bhattachariya in the Tagore Law Lectures.

[2] See *Ante*, p. 201.

themselves. Thus the Brahmins are then fed and well treated vicariously. There must be seven Brahmins specially called for this ceremony. In the case of the ordinary shráddhas, to be described later on, there need be only two or three such. They are named bhóktas or those who eat or enjoy. The seven called for the sapindi rite are said to be:—one to represent Vishnu, two the Vishvadévas (deities that presides over shráddhas), three the deceased's immediate three ancestors, and one to represent the préta. The two called for ordinary shráddha rites are said to be:—one to represent the Vishvadévas and one the spirit of the deceased. It is not always easy to get fit and proper Brahmins for these rites and they must be rewarded for coming. The food they vicariously eat on these occasions is supposed to defile, and it necessitates purificatory ceremonies of rather a severe nature. An old pundit friend assured me that, though he used often to go to such ceremonies, it was always against his desire; but that it would be sinful not to respond to the appeal of the karta for help. A Brahmin to be fit for this duty should be over sixteen years of age, and both his parents must be still living. According to Manu, he should also be a man of light and learning:—

"Food, consecrated to the gods and the manes, must be presented to a theologian of eminent learning; for certainly, when hands are smeared with blood, they cannot be cleaned with blood only, nor can sin be removed by the company of sinners.

As many mouthfuls as an unlearned man shall swallow at an oblation to the gods and to ancestors, so many red-hot iron balls must the giver of the shráddha swallow in the next world." (iii. 132, 133).

The sapindi rite may be thus briefly described. When the bhóktas are seated near the spot where the deceased breathed his last, and before the food for the meal is served, four vessels made of leaves are placed,

three in front of those who represent the three immediate ancestors, and one in front of the representative of the deceased. The karta, having poured water into these vessels, takes that which is for the deceased and, at the repeating of a mantram, pours some of the water from it into the other three vessels. This is supposed to indicate the union of the spirit of the deceased with those of his immediate ancestors. After this ceremony is over, the food is placed before the bhóktas. Whilst they are eating it, the karta prepares four large lumps of the boiled rice with the various condiments and other accessories that form the meal of the bhóktas. One of these lumps he rolls up into a cylindrical shape, which he places side by side with the other three lumps in front of those assembled. The cylindrical mass is supposed to represent the deceased, and the three lumps his three immediate ancestors—father, grandfather, and great grandfather. The mass representing the deceased is then divided by the karta into three portions, one of each of which is mixed with one of the three balls. During this operation various mantrams are said. The three balls are then taken by the karta and thrown in water, a river, a tank, or a well. By this rite the préta, or goblin, or impure spirit stage of existence is supposed to pass away, and the soul of the deceased becomes a pita, that is, one invested with a kind of ethereal body. It is then admitted to the company of his semi-divine ancestral fathers.

I now enter upon a subject with reference to which there are very divided and, in some cases, very vague ideas current amongst Hindus of the present day. Some suppose that by the due observance of the rites already mentioned, the pita passes at once beyond the reach of Yama, the genius of death and judge of departed spirits, into the ancestral heaven (pitrulókam), there to remain until the end of the age when it will

become absorbed into the divine essence. That is to say, by the ceremonies of the survivors rightly performed, not only will there be no punishment in hell, but there will also be no rebirths. According to this notion, a man's future condition is not made to depend so much upon his own good or evil deeds, as upon the faithfulness with which the survivors perform stated ceremonies. Others again, in accordance with the Vedanta philosophy, maintain what may be called the orthodox doctrine, which with various modifications is the belief of the mass of Hindus. This belief is that upon attaining the pita state of existence, the spirit departs on its journey to Yama to receive its doom according to its deeds done in the body. The temporary hell (pápalókam or yamalókam), or the temporary heaven (punyalókam or svargam) to which it may be consigned will be its abode, until it has received in either state the reward that is its due. At the end of this period, whether long or short, the spirit will be reborn into some other state, again to commence the weary round of existence from which it would fain be released. Those pious souls, however, who have in their passage through their various states of existence attained into gnánam (true wisdom) will pass straight to Brahmalókam (the heaven of Brahma), there to remain in the enjoyment of heavenly bliss until the end of the age (praláyam), when they will be elevated to Nirvána (móksham), that is, absorption into the supreme essence. This consummation is the end and aim of every pious Hindu. It seems to be the object of the shráddhas to assist the spirits of those on whose behalf the ceremonies are observed in their course to other worlds, and at their dreadful trial before Yama. They are also intended to support them and to further their development in the state of being in which they may be doomed to exist, and to hasten their passage through it. For Sanyásis or Holy Hermits no nitya karmas or any

other rites are required; the souls of such do not become prétas, but pass at once on leaving the body into the pita stage and proceed straight to Brahmalókam. For these, therefore, no ceremonies or shráddhas are necessary and to them worship is paid as though they were divine. There is much that is very complex and conflicting in the various schools of thought with regard to the future state, and the benefit of ancestral ceremonies; but this description will give a general idea of the subject.

Although the sapindi karanam and the nitya karma are shráddhas of a kind, the first shráddha proper is performed on the twelfth day, that is, sometime during the day on the morning of which the sapindi rite has been observed. This is called másika, or monthly shráddha, and it is the commencement of those which are performed every month for the first year, on the thirtieth day after the death. These monthly ceremonies are very much like the sapindi rite, except that there will be only two or three bhóktas, and only three lumps of rice and condiments without the long cylindrical roll. Very minute directions are given in Manu about the performance of these rites. They must never be done at night, but always in the day time :—

"Obsequies must not be performed by night; since the night is called rácshasi or infested by demons; nor whilst the sun is rising or setting, nor when it has just risen" (iii. 280).

The karta must treat the bhóktas respectfully, and he must urge them to eat the various dishes provided :—

"Then being duly purified and with perfect presence of mind let him take up all the dishes, one by one, and present them in order to the Brahmins, proclaiming their qualities" (iii. 228).

He must be very cautious how he moves about and also be careful of his feelings. He must repress any emotion or he may by carelessness, or by his tears

cause disaster instead of benefit to those for whom he is performing the ceremony:—

"Let him at no time drop a tear, let him on no account be angry, let him say nothing false, let him not touch the eatables with his foot, let him not even shake the dishes:

A tear sends the messes to restless ghosts; anger, to foes; falsehood, to dogs; contact with his foot, to demons; agitation, to sinners" (iii. 229—30).

He must be careful how he disposes of food that may be left from this ceremonial meal. It is said:—

"Thus having ended the shráddha, let him cause a cow, a priest, a kid, or the fire to devour what remains of the cakes; or let him cast them into the waters" (iii. 260).

The punishment of those who, instead of disposing of the remains of the feast in this manner, give them to a low caste man to eat will be very severe:—

"That fool, who having eaten of the shráddha, gives the residue of it to a man of the servile class, falls headlong down to the hell named Cálasútra" (iii. 240).

The ordinary shráddha ceremony may be thus described. Two or three bhóktas with the puróhita come to the house by invitation, and they are duly seated in the usual place for such proceedings. At these shráddhas, the bhóktas and puróhita sit in the sacred kitchen-dining room. If there are two guests, one sits facing the north, and the other facing the east. If there is a third, he sits looking towards the south. The karta having duly bathed performs a hómam sacrifice in presence of the guests, and then, seating himself opposite to them, recites the names of the century, the year, the month, the day and the two sacred rivers between which the place is situated in which they then happen to be. He then proceeds to wash their feet and to wipe them, after sprinkling some of the water on his own head with darbha grass. After this he worships the guests, scattering over them

darbha grass, sesamum seeds, raw rice and sandalwood paste, looking upon them as though they were actually his deceased ancestors and performing the same worship to them as he does to his gods. Another sacrifice by fire is then performed into which some of the food that has been specially prepared for the occasion is cast. The remainder is then served out to the guests, but the chief performer or karta must not partake of it. In ancient times, certain kinds of flesh used to be eaten on these occasions, but now this is replaced by some grain. After the meal is over, the guests are just asked whether they have eaten heartily. They must answer in the affirmative. The question and answer are as follows:—

पितृपितामहप्रपितामहाः तृप्ताःस्थ तृप्ताःस्थ तृप्ताःस्मः ॥

"O my father, my grandfather, my great-grandfather, Are you satisfied? Are you satisfied?

We are satisfied."

Whilst the bhóktas are busily engaged in eating the food prepared for and set before them, the karta has been employed in making three large lumps of rice and condiments from the various eatables and, after they have finished eating their repast, he proceeds to worship the lumps in precisely the same way as he had before worshipped the guests. The worship being now finished, the karta takes a grain of the rice, and repeating a mantram puts it into his mouth. The lumps which represent the deceased ancestors for the three preceding generations are then given to a cow to eat, or, if no cow is at hand, they are burnt or buried or thrown into some deep river, tank, or well, whichever mode of desposing of them may be most convenient. The karta, after worshipping the lumps which he has thus prepared, gets a little cooked rice in a leaf and pours some water upon it. He then sprinkles this on the floor

around the leaf-plate of one of the bhóktas saying, at the same time, the following slókam:—

असंस्कृत प्रमीता ये महाकन्याः कुलस्त्रियः ।
दास्यापि तेभ्यो विकिर मन्नं ताभ्यश्च पैतृकं ॥

"Whoever has died without the sacraments,
Whether man, virgin or woman, of my tribe,
For them this food I give;
For them this is a shráddha."

After this, the karta takes a small portion of the rice and placing it before each of the bhóktas says a mantram for the benefit of any ancestors who may have been accidentally killed by fire or water, and who may not have had the necessary ceremonies duly performed.

The ceremony being now complete, the bhóktas are presented with betel and the fee for their services, after which they take their departure. It is the rule that these guests take no more food on that day, nor must they do anything or touch anything that would cause ceremonial defilement. Before leaving the house, the guests, or the karta, pronounce the following blessing:—

"May generous givers abound in our house. May the scriptures be studied, and progeny increase in it. May faith never depart from us, and may we have much to bestow on the needy." (Manu, iii. 259).

A feast is then given by the karta to his friends and relatives as well as to many Brahmins. Presents are distributed to them of money, cloths, or copper and brass vessels. On the following day a similar feast is given to the low caste neighbours and the poor, who also expect presents from their host.

This concludes the first monthly shráddha. Upon its repetition on every thirtieth day, there is only the ceremonial feast for the bhóktas and not any general feasting.

At the end of the year there is a good deal of feasting, according to the means of the family, just as at

the first monthly shráddha. This is to mark the termination of the monthly ceremonies Afterwards the annual ceremony is performed on the anniversary of the death.

The ceremonies already described apply to Brahmins. The Sudras follow the same ritual to a certain extent, but there are these exceptions. The three chief guests are Brahmins, one of whom is the puróhita. The feeding of these is not done on the spot, as they could not eat food cooked by Sudras, so provisions are given to them which they take away and cook and eat by themselves. It is imperative that the very articles thus given be actually cooked and eaten by them. After the ceremonies have been duly performed in presence of the Brahmins, and when they have taken their departure, the Sudra karta sits down with the near relatives, who have been previously invited, to partake of a meal in honour of the dead. Although Sudras usually eat meat and fish at this meal, it is only the Vaishnavas who partake of flesh; the others make a point of having no meat whatever at this particular time.

These annual ceremonies, differing somewhat in form, are performed for both sexes by Hindus of every caste and sect. It is for the due performance of the funeral and annual ceremonies, that a Hindu longs so earnestly for a son. If a man dies having no male issue, his soul must suffer accordingly. If a man's wife bears him no son, he must either marry another wife or adopt a boy. The latter is usually done, and adoption has thus become an important institution amongst Hindus.

In addition to the ordinary shráddhas, when opportunity offers and there is the ability to take advantage of them, extra shráddhas are performed at sacred rivers and at such holy places as Rámëshvaram, Srirangam, Kumbakonam and other places in the south; and at Benáres, Allahabad, Gayá and other places in the north; but for

these ceremonies no places appear to be so beneficial as Gayá and its neighbourhood. Great merit is attached to the performance of the ceremonies at any such places, but the efficacy of those at Gayá is such that, when fully and properly performed, the spirits of the departed relatives for whom the observances are made, no matter at what stage of existence they may be, are at once admitted to the heaven of Vishnu, the highest heaven (Vaikuntha).

Besides these ceremonies, there are also daily observances partaking of the same nature. Each day the karta or head of the household, at the time of going through his daily devotions, pours out water to the manes of his ancestors mentioning them as he does so. This is called tarpanam, or a drink offering. He also does the same just before partaking of his food. It will thus be seen how large a share ancestral worship has in the religion of the Hindu.

There may be very much difference in detail in different parts of the country and I may have omitted some detail of a ceremony. Enough, however, has been explained to give a fair idea of what is done, and to show the truth of the saying that the Hindus are a very religious people. There is no greater cause of financial misery in Hindu families than the expenses at marriages and funerals. In the case of wealthy men the burden is a great one; but in ordinary cases the funds have to be obtained from the money lender at an exorbitant rate of interest, loading the poor victims with a life-long burden of debt. The custom is, however, so deeply rooted and the Hindus are so thoroughly conservative, that it seems barely possible for any effectual improvement to be made. The amelioration of matters of this kind amongst such a people can only be effected by the gradual growth of public opinion in the right direction; and any change of opinion, sufficient to be felt, must occupy a very long time in its formation.

To the Christian wellwisher of India it is touching to see a people thus groping after pardon for sin and happiness beyond the grave; striving to obtain by a slavish adherence to the letter of a dead law, what can only be obtained through that only "name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved." All the vague longings of the Hindu are very different from the bright hopes of the Christian, and great is the contrast between the mantrams repeated at a Hindu funeral and the comforting words used at the graveside of one who is committed to the earth:—

"In sure and certain hope of the Resurrection to eternal life, through our Lord Jesus Christ; who shall change our vile body, that it may be like unto His glorious body, according to the mighty working, whereby He is able to subdue all things to Himself."

CHAPTER XIII.

UNORTHODOX HINDU FUNERALS.

अधर्मोत्तरक्रिय. (Adharmottara Kriya.)

"The Ayógava, the Cshattri and the Chandála, the lowest of men, spring from a Sudra in an inverse order of the classes, and are therefore, all three excluded from the performance of obsequies to their ancestors." (Manu, x. 16.)

MANU gives as the origin of the debased classes irregular intercourse between members of the four castes, and the intermingling of the despicable offspring resulting from such irregularities.[1] During their lifetime they must exist in a most abject condition, living apart from the upper castes in mountains, groves, or places for burning the dead, anywhere outside of the towns inhabited by their superiors.[2] Their clothing, food and general surroundings must be of the most miserable nature, and their occupation of the most degrading character.[3] This is not only so, but even after death the curse of their birth must follow them. The quotation at the head of this chapter shows that these poor unfortunates are not to have even the consolation of funeral rites for their dead.

All that has been said in the preceding chapters about funeral rites and periodical shráddhas has only to do with the four castes, and particularly with the

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[1] Manu, x. 5, 40. [2] Ibid, x. 50—1. [3] Ibid, x. 50—6.

three higher ones. The non-castes or out-castes are not supposed to have anything to do with such things. These non-caste people do, however, perform certain funeral rites and have shráddha ceremonies of a kind. It is not very clear with what object they perform the various ceremonies. Probably they have in view, the spiritual good of the departed; but their ideas on this head appear to be very confused and uncertain. The motive that seems to actuate them is fear. It is thought well to treat the departed spirit kindly and to divert its attention, so as to prevent its inflicting any injury on the living. In fact, these observances seem to be a survival of ancient Dravidian rites tinged with an admixture of Hinduism.

The Málas, or Telugu Pariahs, are representatives of the middle line between the Hindus proper and the lowest pagans. The funeral rites of the Málas represent generally those of the classes here intended. The Málas, as a rule, burn their dead; but though this is considered amongst them as the more respectable way, yet there are very many exceptions to the rule. There are some sections of this class who always bury; and many who would cremate if they could afford it, but who are driven by poverty to the less expensive method of disposing of their dead. There seems to be a general notion amongst these latter, that the soul of the deceased somehow suffers on account of such a departure from custom. They bury children and small-pox victims as the caste people do. In times of pestilence, also when cholera is prevalent, they bury. This is merely from being generally panic stricken, or from the difficulty of getting any help from their neighbours who fear contagion. At such times the dead are often disposed of in a very summary way.

When a person is at the point of death, there do not appear to be any religious rites or ceremonies whatever amongst these people. They follow out the

customs, already alluded to[1] of taking the dying person outside the house so as to prevent possible pollution to the dwelling place. Should the household ascertain from the Pariah priest that the day is a lucky one, they suffer the patient to die in the house; otherwise, they are as particular as the upper castes are in putting the sufferer outside to die. Amongst Hindus, in the event of a person's dying inside the house during an unlucky conjunction of the stars, not only must that particular household vacate the dwelling for a period of time, but the neighbours also must do the same. Hence public opinion is very strong in the matter of suffering any one to die inside a house. It must be very trying, particularly in the rainy season, for the sick person to have to turn out of his house and live in a temporary shed; it may be for some months.

The dying person is placed on the ground to die. Should the poor sufferer seem to be a long time in dying, a cruel custom, which seems to be practised by the upper castes also, is carried out. It is thought that from excessive love for some one, the husband for the wife, or the wife for the husband, or the parents for a child, as the case may be, the spirit is loth to quit the body. If this is the case, a little water or some other liquid is poured into the mouth by the one supposed to be thus excessively loved, or perhaps by several, one after the other. If it should be thought that through an avaricious disposition the spirit is loth to depart some coins are taken and washed in water, the water being then poured into the mouth of the dying person. Such a practice may often hasten death, even in cases where, perhaps, a recovery might otherwise have been possible.

Burial or cremation follows quickly upon death. Three or four hours after the last breath, there may be nothing left of the departed but a heap of ashes.

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[1] *Ante*, p. 196.

When life has left the body, it is bathed. The priest, if present, says a slókam or verse of some kind, but, if he is not present, no prayers are said and the body is merely dressed up and fastened to the bier.

Some of the Málas are Vaishnavas of the Rámánuja sect, and a few are Saivas; but the bulk of them are practically pagans, idolaters of a very low kind. In some things they appear to follow Hindu rites in a very feeble sort of way; but it is merely an apeing of what they see the higher castes do, and their religion, if they may be said to have any at all, seems to be a relic of ancient Dravidian idolatry just tinged with Hinduism, largely admixed with demonolatry. This latter class of Málas take the dead person straight off to the burning ground or burying place and dispose of the body without any rites, except that the karta will carry water three times round the pile and then throw it away. The Vaishnavas, however, offer a sacrifice before taking away the body. A fowl, or in some few cases of comparatively wealthy people, a sheep or a goat is killed, and its blood is allowed to drip on the spot where the deceased breathed his last. A cocoanut, at least, will be broken over the spot and the water allowed to drip there. This is done even by the very poorest who are not able to procure a fowl. This is to satisfy the spirit just departed and to keep it from harming any one near. The karta also cooks some food of which the slain fowl will form a part, and a portion of this is offered to the deceased by touching the mouth with some of it three times. The portion thus offered is then thrown to the crows. Arrack (country spirit) also is poured into the mouth of the corpse. All this is done to please the departed spirit. The rest of the food and arrack is then given to those who are to carry the bier, the karta placing the food into their hands and giving them the arrack to drink.

After this the body is fastened to the bier and borne to the cemetery. The Vaishnavas have a peculiar arrangement attached to the head of the bier, the reason for which is not easy to find out. Two sticks are tied across each other, which again have cross pieces, the whole forming a kind of St. Helena cross. At three of the four ends of the projecting cross pieces a lime is fastened. This whole arrangement is fixed to one end of the bier so as to form a canopy over the head of the corpse. This may have had its origin in serpent worship, and the idea may be that of the cobra with expanded hood swaying over the head. Vaishnavas other than the Mála ones appear also to adopt this device. Four men carry the bier, and when the bearers lift up their burden they raise it up a little and then lower it again, doing this three times and each time crying out Náráyana! or Góvinda!—names of Vishnu and Krishna respectively. The bier is set down three times on the way to the cemetery, when on each end of the two main poles of the bier a coin is placed. These coins are taken up by the dásari as a perquisite. This ceremony of placing coins is also done by the upper castes. When the bier is on the ground some grain and saffron are scattered round it. The grain is afterwards eaten by the birds. Each time the bier is lifted up, it is with the three upliftings and the shouts of Náráyana! or Góvinda! Some of the Málas who bury the dead place the body in the grave in a sitting position, thus necessitating a peculiar shaped bier; ordinarily, however, the recumbent posture is observed. The funeral procession is much the same as with the orthodox Hindus. The karta carries the fire and, as a rule, no women follow.

The Mála cemetery is always distinct, and often at some considerable distance, from that of the caste people; for even in death there must be no contamination by too close proximity. The place is, if possible,

a more dreary and miserable spot still than that of the orthodox. The idea of paying any attention to the keeping of a cemetery tidy seems never to enter into the mind of a Hindu.

The actual burning or burying details are, to a certain extent, the same as those already described in the case of the orthodox, except that there are no mantrams or hómams. The body is carefully stripped before being put into the grave or on to the pile. In the case of the death of a pregnant woman, when the corpse is placed on the pile, or just before putting it into the grave, a kind of rough Cæsarean operation is performed by the husband, the details of which are too revolting to mention. This custom, which appears to be prevalent amongst all classes of Hindus, seems to be connected with the same idea as that which causes the body to be stripped quite naked. 'We brought nothing with us into this world and we must carry nothing out." Each must depart as he came.

The karta carries a pot of water round the pile three times before setting the fire alight, and then throws it over his shoulder; in the case of those who bury, the water is carried round the grave. There is very little by way of ceremony of any kind, except that when the body is placed on the pile or into the grave the name of Náráyana or Góvinda is called on. No prayers or slokas are said. The grave is dug and the pile also is placed so that the body shall lie, whether buried or burnt, with its head towards the south. This custom arises from the idea that it is unlucky to sleep with the head towards the south. Whilst some Hindus will not sleep with the head to the south, others think it most unlucky to sleep with the head towards the north. The company all bathe after the funeral and that finishes the ceremonies for that day. The members of the funeral group usually then go to a drinking shop to drink arrack at the expense of the

karta. Nothing is done at the house, except that the women clean up the place after the funeral party have gone. They purify it by smearing it with the dung of cows and by sprinkling it with water in which that purifying substance has been mixed.

For several nights after a burial, a small fire of some kind is kept on the grave, even if it should only be a smouldering wisp of straw. This is to frighten off the jackals which might otherwise unearth the body. This precaution, however, does not always prevent such a revolting thing taking place. The corpse is never put into a coffin by Hindus, though some of the Christians who can afford it, especially in the towns, adopt the European fashion, using wooden or bamboo wicker basket coffins. In the villages, the Christians have few facilities for such refinements, and a winding sheet with an outer covering of matting supplies all that is really needful for decency and reverential regard for the dead. Sometimes when cholera or any other pestilence is prevalent, or when any one happens to die whilst on a journey, the survivors may merely cast out the body to become a prey to the vultures and jackals.

I now describe funeral obsequies which represent the nitya karma and sapindi rites of the Brahminical religion. There are two such ceremonies amongst the Málas, called in Telugu the chinnadinamu and the peddadinamu, or the little day and the big or important day. The former of these may be observed on the very day of the funeral, or on the third or fifth day afterwards. It is generally done on the fifth day. The day fixed upon will depend upon the position of certain stars, which matter is decided by the dásari. It can never be on an even day, as odd numbers are lucky whilst even ones are unluckly. The peddadinamu is always observed on the fifteenth day after the death. Until the chinnadinamu rite has been performed, it is proper for the karta to take his food sitting on the spot where

the death actually took place. It is also usual to place a light there each night until that rite has been performed.

Amongst the Málas there is a very peculiar division into those who perform funeral observances in the day time, and those who only do so at night. According to the Brahminical religion no such observances should take place at night at all, and it is curious how this night-observing sect sprung into existence. Those who observe these rites in the day time are called in Telugu pakshivésévàru or those who throw to the birds. The reason for this will be seen further on. Those who observe the ceremonies in the night time are called tirupallivàru. It is not clear what this word means, but it is of Tamil origin and comes from a word meaning a tomb. Although these two divisions are very distinct amongst the Málas, it does not appear to manifest itself in any other way than in the differences in the observances of those funeral rites. This distinction also exists amongst some other sections of the community.

On the day fixed upon by the dásari for the chinnadinamu, there is a gathering of friends at the house of the deceased. The observances amongst the two sections are very much the same for this rite, except that one section begins the rites in the morning and performs them during the day, and the other section begins them in the evening and carries them on through the night. I shall point out where the usages of the day-observers differ from those of the night-observers.

The dásari and a few friends assemble at the house of the deceased. The whole dwelling has been previously cleaned up by the women of the house and the floors well smeared over with the all-purifying mixture of cowdung and water. The dásari then takes a vessel of water and with a bunch of leaves proceeds to sprinkle the people present and the room in which

they are congregated, repeating at the same time various names of Vishnu and the sankalpam, or a declaration of the place, time, tribe, and name of the deceased. It includes also a prayer for pardon of sin. He then prepares a place on the earth near the spot where the death took place, and with white powder draws a cabalistic figure, formed of two parallel lines drawn at right angles across two other parallel lines, the ends of the four lines being all joined together by cross lines. This is called ashtáksharam or the eight figures. Near this figure a heap of rice is placed. This is a perquisite of the dásari who grumbles much, if the heap is not as large as he likes. He then brings certain figures, called in Telugu perumállu and places them on the heap of rice. The figures represent the gods and their retinue. The karta slays a fowl or a sheep over the spot, as on the day of the funeral, and this is given to the women of the household to cook. When the rice and curries have been duly prepared, a portion is placed near the perumállu and another portion is placed into vessels which the dásari and karta, with a few friends, take to the cemetery.

On arriving at the cemetery, if they are night-observers, they proceed to gather together the ashes of the funeral pile and pour water upon them, the whole being flattened down and made smooth. In the case of those who bury, the top of the grave is thus prepared. A leaf-plate is put on the prepared place and the food brought is laid upon it. The dásari then places on a separate leaf three lumps of the food. This is supposed to be for the departed spirit, but it is eaten by the karta. The remainder is divided by the dásari amongst the others present who forthwith eat it. A little arrack is also given to them to drink. On thus dividing the food, the dásari, in the name of the karta, says words to the following effect:—

"As this departed spirit has committed sins, it cannot appear

before god; therefore these ceremonies are performed in the hope that it may thereby be fitted to enter heaven."

This ceremony closely resembles the feeding of the Bhóktás by the orthodox, of which it is probably an imitation. In the case of the day-observers, the food is placed on the spot where the cremation took place or on the grave, but those present do not eat of it. They simply place it there and then go away a little distance to allow the crows and other birds to come and take it. When the birds have once begun to eat the food thus placed, the persons are satisfied and take their departure. On placing the food the dásari says words to the following effect:—

"O Náráyana, who bearest the conch shell, the wheel and the club, I make namaskáram to thee. Grant that by the giving of this food this spirit may be satisfied."

Amongst this section of the people, each day from the funeral to the chinnadinamu, the karta before he partakes of his meals places a portion of his food on the house to attract the birds, and until a bird has begun to eat what is thus placed he does not taste his own meal. This must be very tantalizing to a hungry man, especially if there should happen to be no birds in the neighbourhood. The Indian crow, however, is ubiquitous and it really seems to know untuitively when anything of the kind is going on by which it can get something to satisfy its rapacious, omnivorous appetite. This is why the day-observers are called pakshivésévárn, or those who throw to the birds.

After this ceremony a small feast is prepared at the house and partaken of by the dásari and a few friends. The dásari must be well fed and must also have an extra liberal share of the arrack provided for the feast. After the meal is over it is customary for the dásari to make a funeral oration in which he sets forth the good qualities of the deceased.

Nothing further is done until the fifteenth day when the most important ceremonies are performed, answering to a certain extent to the sapindi rites of the orthodox. The ceremonies on this day are very different amongst the two sections. In the case of night-observers, the dásari and friends assemble at the house of the deceased, when the karta and the friends and relatives of the deceased, who are of the same surname (house-name), all shave the head and the face. The karta also has his moustache shaven off, and in some cases even the sikha. The killing of the fowl or sheep, and the ceremony of the ashtáksharam are all gone through as on the chinnadinamu, except that there is no visit paid to the cemetery. As a very large number of people gather together for this ceremony, a pig may possibly be killed. On this occasion there is feasting and drinking as at a great wedding feast.

Sometime after the sun sets the dásari proceeds to tie together with some sticks a contrivance about two or three feet high. Cross pieces are also tied so as to make two little platforms inside, one of which is for a lamp. Some cotton cloth is tied round the upper part of this arrangement so as to form a shelter for the lamp, and also to make it look like a little shrine. The name given to this in Telugu is tritéru or the three-storied car. A light is placed inside this shrine and it is taken up by the dásari who is accompanied by the assembled friends both male and female. Strumming on his guitar-like instrument, he proceeds, singing a song, to some place near an adjacent main road. A specimen of the songs thus sung, supplied to me by a dásari, is a meaningless composition referring to Ráma in a pantheistic way, as being all things and pervading all things. There is no allusion in it whatever to the ceremony itself or anything connected with it. Arrived at a suitable spot they all sit down round the temporary shrine, now lighted up, and the

dásari repeats some verses, during which recitation, the men and women come up to him, one by one. He then touches their foreheads with some coloured rice. Each one gives, as a fee to the priest, a copper coin of small value.

After this ceremony has been gone through, if the one who died were a man leaving a widow, the rite of declaring her widowhood is then performed. The dásari and several relatives, male and female, take the widow apart to some adjacent place, probably the bank of the village tank. Here the dásari, repeating a slókam, cuts the mangalasútram off the widow's neck and breaks the glass bangles from her wrists and puts on her a pair of brass bracelets, which have been brought for the purpose and which amongst these people are a sign of widowhood. The head of the Mála widow is not shaven, and she is at liberty to marry again if opportunity should offer. A new cloth is produced which is thrown over the head of the widow, and then blindfolded she is led back to the group around the tritéru. During the whole of this operation there is much weeping and wailing by the women assembled. If the deceased person should be a woman, her husband is taken aside in the same way and his loin-cord is cut off with some little ceremony. This loin-cord is a very important part of the man's attire, but it is not easy to understand the meaning of this ceremony. The following is a free rendering of the words, which do not seem very relevant to the circumstances, repeated by the dásari when cutting off the magalasútram from the widow, or the loin-cord from the man:—

"I (god) am the destroyer of all diseases. I absolve thee from such sins as the killing of infants, of women, of Brahmins, and of cows, the causing abortions, of drunkenness, stealing of gold, adultery, robbery, slander and the like. Do not lament."

On returning to the group around the little shrine there is usually much drinking of arrack, or country

spirit, after which the assembly proceed to the house for a big feast. Each one of the relatives to show respect or affection to the memory of the deceased, brings a portion of arrack to add to the amount for consumption.

In the case of the day-observing section, there is no tritéru, but the friends repair to the bank of a neighbouring tank, or to some other water, where the shaving and widow rites are all gone through in much the same way. After this they all bathe and then return to the house for a feast.

When the feast is over, it is usual, as at weddings, for the friends and relatives to signify their respect for the deceased by presenting money and other things to the karta, for which purpose grain is brought. This custom is really a way of mutually assisting each other in the heavy expenses of the ceremony, and it is expected that the recipients of such aid shall in like manner assist the givers on any similar occasion. This help is called katnam, a word meaning dues or gifts. The way these gifts are collected is rather peculiar. After the feast is over the dásari receives from each one a gift, and as he takes it he holds it up above his head, shouting out that so and so has given such and such a sum in the name of so and so (the deceased). He then gives a leap up into the air and repeats a verse. This goes on until each one who intends doing so has presented his contributions. The dásari receives a fee for his trouble. After this he sits and tells stories until night or day light, as the case may be, when the company separate.

The reason given for all this feasting and drinking and telling of stories is that the departed spirit may be satisfied and go away, without causing any harm to the living. They fear that, if it were not thus satisfied, the spirit might take away some one to be with it, especially one whom it had loved in its life-

time. A further idea in these ceremonies is that not only will the departing spirit be benefited; but also that if it reaches heaven it will intercede for the survivors. A fear of demons and evil spirits is one that dominates the minds of these people to a fearful extent, and there is little doubt but that this feeling, more than any other, prompts the masses of India in their funeral rites and observances for the dead.

The Málas, like the orthodox Hindus, have a ceremony for the dead every month for the first year after the decease, and on the last of these there is a feast something like that of the peddadinamu. There is also an annual ceremony made by those who can afford it.

The description given of the funeral rites and ceremonies of the Málas may also serve for those of the Mádigas, or dealers in skins and leather. There are minor differences, but substantially their céremonies are the same. This description will also be sufficient to give a general idea of the funeral rites of most of those castes or tribes who, though not regularly included within the pale of the Brahminical religion, still to a certain extent perform, in an illegitimate kind of way, rites and ceremonies of evidently Hindu origin; which at the same time are mixed up with ceremonies derived from undoubted pagan sources.

Having no personal knowledge of the death ceremonies of tribes totally, or almost so, unconnected with Hinduism, I have consulted a few of the Government District Manuals for information on the subject, and the rest of this chapter is chiefly taken from these sources. The Nilgiri District Manual compiled by the late Mr. Grigg contains most interesting information which will answer all my purpose. It describes a great variety of customs current amongst non-Hindu tribes.

The most interesting of these ceremonies are those of the Tódas. At the funerals of these people a number of buffaloes are killed to supply the deceased with milk

in the next world, of which they seem to have some distinct ideas. The viaticum for a dying Tóda is a drink of milk, and after death he is wrapped up in a garment, into the pockets of which is placed a supply of grain and sugar for use on the ghostly journey. There are two funeral ceremonies called the green funeral and the dry funeral. The former is the actual funeral ceremony, and the latter is that which answers somewhat to the sapindi rite of the orthodox.

Very soon after death the body is carried out to the burying ground and a small herd of buffaloes is driven along with the procession. Each animal has a little bell hung round its neck and each one is driven close up to the funeral pile. The mourners present include women and children. Each one present takes up three handfuls of earth and throwing it upon the body says, "Let him go into the soil." The rest of this touching ceremony may be best given in Mr. Grigg's own words: "The recumbent corpse is now lifted up in the arms of the relatives, and each cow in succession is dragged by two men up to her master, whose arm is raised and made to touch the animal's horns. After this the pyre is lighted by fire made by the friction of two sticks. The body is lifted up and swung three times from side to side, then laid on the burning wood face downwards. As the flames devour the body the people cry, 'shall we kill buffaloes for you? You are going to Amnúr (heaven); may it be well with you; may all thy sins go.' One or two buffaloes are now killed, and, as each creature falls dead from a blow from the butt end of an axe, the people crowd round it, sobbing and lamenting and kissing its face. After this they sit round the bier in pairs with their faces together and their foreheads touching, weeping bitterly and wailing in true oriental fashion."

The skull and bones are preserved for the dry funeral. There is no religious ceremony at the cremation

nor is it necessary for any priests to be present. The dry funeral is not celebrated at any particular period after death; it seems that, owing to the ceremony being a large one involving considerable expense, opportunity is taken for two or three dry funerals to be celebrated together. The whole lasts for three days and the chief feature is the slaughter of buffaloes, two or three for each of the dead commemorated. The carcases of the slain buffaloes are a perquisite of the Kótas who act as musicians on the occasion. Rites are performed with the blood of one of the slain animals. This may lead to the supposition that some way or other, it takes away the sins of the deceased. A buffalo calf is also let loose as a "scape-goat," with shouts of, "May he enter heaven; may it be well with his good deeds and his sins." The whole ceremony concludes as follows. What is called the kéd is burnt with some ceremony. It is not explained what the kéd is, but it appears to be some receptacle containing the skull and bones left from the cremation. In the early morning, before dawn, this kéd is burnt, together with a miniature bow and three arrows, a sickle, an axe, a palm-leaf umbrella, and some coarse sugar and pulse. Sitting round the fire the mourners wail for the dead, whilst the Kóta musicians play on their instruments. At dawn, water is sprinkled on the embers and a pit is dug into which the ashes are scraped, the whole being covered with a large stone. "Finally a dim figure enters the circle, and raising a chatty high over his head, dashes it into pieces on the stone covering the ashes, bends down, touches the stone with his forehead, and hastens away. All the others perform in turn the same prostration, and, flitting silently down the hill, a procession of hurrying shadows fades into the mist, through which twinkles the distant fire of the kédmanei. Imagination might easily transform them into the departing spirits of the propitiated dead."

I have already referred to the simple marriage rites of the Badagas.[1] Their funeral ceremonies appear to be much more elaborate. When a person is seen to be dying, a very small gold coin is dipped in ghee (clarified butter) and placed between the lips. If this is swallowed, so much the better; if not, it is tied to the arm. This is supposed to pay the expenses of the journey to the next world. This small coin is said to be a Mysore one called a birian-hanna or viria raya and is valued at four annas (four pence). After death, messengers are sent forth to call together friends and relatives, and also to summon Kóta musicians. A funeral car is made with wood and the branches of trees, and draped with cloth. The body is placed on a cot underneath this construction. All the next day a kind of death dance is kept up. The relatives do not join in the dance, but walk round the bier carrying food in their hands and repeating with much weeping the good qualities of the deceased. As with the Tódas, a calf is chosen to be a "scape-goat," and at this ceremony there is much chanting of prayers, concluding as follows: "Let all his sins be forgiven, and may it be well with him, yea, may all be well." The body with the car is then taken and burnt near to some neighbouring stream, and the ashes are collected and thrown into the water.

The Kótas, who act as musicians to the other hill tribes, seem in their funeral rites to copy both the Badagas and the Tódas. They have the car-like erection of the former, which they burn with the implements of the deceased. They also have a dry funeral in imitation of the latter, when skulls are placed on cots and burnt, together with bows and arrows and various other implements.

The Kúrumbas, another tribe also described by Mr. Grigg, whenever they can afford it, administer the small

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[1] *Ante*, Chapter vii, p. 132.

gold coin to their sick when dying, in imitation of the Badagas. They also place the body under a car draped with cloths. After dancing round the car to the sounds of music, they burn the corpse with the car and the ceremony is complete.

The Irulas, whose simple marriages I have already described,[1] bury their dead without much ceremony. The body is placed in the grave in a sitting posture, with a lamp by its side; the friends dance round the grave for some time, after which they fill it up and place a small upright stone to mark the spot, and that is all.

"The Vellans of Cochin either bury or burn their dead. The sons are the chief mourners and perform the funeral rites. The pollution lasts for sixteen days. On the morning of the sixteenth day the hut of the dead man or woman is well swept and cleaned by sprinkling water mixed with cowdung. The members of the family then bathe."[2]

I have given these instances, as they seem to be representative of the various funeral rites of the non-Hinduised tribes of South India; and, as such, they may perhaps be representative of other parts of India.

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[1] *Ante*, p. 133.

[2] For an excellent account of this tribe, see Christian College (Madras) Magazine, August 1907, pp. 76-86. Article on the Vellans of Cochin, by L. K. Ananthakrishna Iyer, B.A.

CHPATER XIV.

HINDU OMENS.

शकुनम्. (Shakunam.)

"Neither by explaining omens and prodigies, nor by skill in astrology and palmistry, nor by casuistry and expositions of holy texts let him (a Sanyási) at any time gain his support." (Manu, vi, 50.)

THE belief in omens has existed in all ages and countries. Traces of it still linger in the most civilized and enlightened communities, and such belief pervades all classes in India. The most unobservant traveller cannot fail to be struck with the peculiar objects, some most grotesque and some most obscene, that are placed in gardens and fields to protect the crops from the evil eye. In order to protect her child from the same baleful influence a mother decks it with charms or some peculiar ornaments. The obscene figures that are sometimes seen over the gateways of Hindu temples are placed there from the same motive. Such superstitions as a belief in the good or evil influence of certain stars or the conjunction of certain planets have a wonderful hold upon the Hindu mind amongst men of every rank and station. The influence of certain numbers is largely believed in by the people; odd numbers are thought to be lucky, whilst even numbers are unlucky;[1] so it becomes a matter of very great anxiety

[1] Musalmans also have an objection to even numbers. See Sell's "Faith of Islám," (ed. 3rd), p. 307.

to a candidate in any public examination whether his number in the list of candidates should turn out to be an odd or an even one. Certain gems are believed to have a good or evil influence on the wearer. Manu says:—

"Together with all his food let him swallow such medicinal substances as resist venom; and let him constantly wear with attention such gems as are known to repel it" (vii. 218).

Any one who has had occasion to sell a horse to a Hindu will have noticed with what care the animal was examined to see if it had certain marks. These marks are not, as one might suppose, signs of breed or soundness; but certain configurations of the hair, showing whether the animal is a lucky or an unlucky one. The position and number of certain natural twists in the hair are taken as an indication of the real value of the animal. A horse with unlucky marks is thought to be certain to bring misfortune, and hence it is very difficult to sell one to a Hindu if it is deficient in these marks. These and numerous similar things which might be alluded to, serve to show how superstition-ridden the Hindu is, even in these days of intellectual progress.[1]

The Sanskrit word used for an omen at the head of this chapter is shakunam, which means primarily a bird, and comes to mean an omen from the fact that in ancient days omens were largely decided by the flight of birds. The old Hindu writings contain passages referring to portents and omens, and the passage quoted from Manu at the head of this chapter does not mean that the art or science of explaining omens is a disreputable one. All that it means is that a Sanyási, being one who is supposed to have finished with

[1] I deal only with omens and do not enter into an account of magic and witchcraft. A good description of the beliefs in them and of the customs connected with them will be found in Crooke's "Natives of Northern India," pp. 246-262. The Muhammadan ideas of magic are given in Herklot's "Qánún-i-Islám," (ed. 1863), pp. 187-254.

worldly affairs, must not, for the sake of acquiring gain, ever engage in what are ordinarily considered sacred employments.

A knowledge of omens is considered an art or science amongst the Hindus generally, and there is a book in Telugu, translated from the Sanskrit, upon this subject. The three divisions of this book are palmistry (sámudrikam), or the interpretation of spots on the body and of creases in the hands; enquiry (prashnam), or divination tried by dipping the hand into the "Rámáyanam"; and omens. There is a class of people who are learned in omens and kindred subjects; the chief of these are the astronomers or astrologers (jyotishka) who, as their name implies, are learned in the stars and occult matters.

The following account of a variety of omens is taken from the book to which I have referred.

OMENS ON SETTING OUT ON A JOURNEY.

There are no less than forty-three different things enumerated as prognosticating good and thirty-four evil, if any of them should happen just as a person sets out on a journey. For instance, it is a good omen to overhear a pleasant conversation, to hear musical instruments; to see a good blaze of fire; to meet a company of dancing girls, or a few young women, to meet an elephant, a horse, or a bullock, or even a corpse, to meet two Brahmans, or four Komaties, or a Sudra with a stick in his hand; to see in front of one an umbrella, fans, mirrors, a harp, diamonds, gold, weapons, fruit or flowers; to hear the braying of an ass from the east, south, north or north-east. It is lucky, if a crow, a parrot, a stork, a heron, or a jackal passes from the left to the right; if a brahminy kite, a hawk, an owl, an iguana, a deer, a musk-rat, a dog, or a mongoose passes from right to left; and if a lizard's cry is heard from the right, or from overhead.

It seems strange that it should be a good omen to meet a corpse, but it is the case. To dream of a corpse, of a blaze of fire, of flowers, of fruit, of having stepped into filth, or of having any filth fall on one's body is considered to be a good omen. To dream of any thing red, such as red flowers, a red cloth or blood is bad.

It is a very anxious time when a good Hindu leaves his home to start out for a journey. He will naturally look and listen carefully for some good sign. A pandit friend tells me that there is no definite distance laid down beyond which bad omens have no effect; but perhaps twenty or twenty-five yards, or even less, may be considered enough as a test. After the traveller gets out into the main street, if the house started from is in a side street, it will not matter much if anything of the nature of a bad omen happens. The setting out, therefore, is the anxious time. It is a bad sign, if any one tries to persuade the departing traveller not to go, or says he had better take some food before starting, or offers to accompany him, or enquires as to where he is going, or pulls his garment to keep him back. It is considered a bad omen when a person sets out, to meet, or to see in front of him, any of the following:—a woman with plaited red hair[1], a widow, a new pot, a whirlwind, drops of rain, a bundle of firewood, a single Brahmin, an oil-monger, a pariah, a lame man, men quarrelling, men in suffering, men with

[1] "Superstitions as to its being unlucky to meet a woman when setting out to fish, or upon any journey by sea, are not uncommon in the West of Ireland. A boat was beating across the bay against a heavy sea and stiff breeze, which had suddenly sprung up. After a long and hard fight for it, the little craft made the pier in safety, and upon condolences being offered the skipper on his recent hardships, he said: "Sure, what better luck could I have? Didn't I meet a red-headed woman in Sligo this morning the moment I left my lodging to walk down to the boat!" Spectator, August 10, 1907. p. 190.

dishevelled hair, a hunchback, a leper, invalids, butter-milk, oil, empty pots, grass, bones, a bundle of dirty clothes, smoking fire or various other things which are mentioned. It is not a good sign to see an ass either to the west, the north-west, the south-west or the south-east with its head hanging down and braying; or to see a crow, a parrot, a stork, a heron, or a jackal pass from the right to the left.

If any of these bad omens appears to a pious Hindu when he is setting out on a journey, especially if the journey is an important one, he will certainly turn back home again. On entering his house he will carefully wash his feet and then perform achamanam, which is sipping of water three times, repeating the following names of Vishnu, Késhava Sváha! hail Krishna, Náráyana Sváha! hail Náráyana, Mádhava Sváha! hail Mádhava. After this is over, and after spending some time in quiet meditation, he will again set forth. If after a succession of attempts he still meets with bad omens the journey will be deferred entirely for the day, if not altogether given up. If the traveller is a Sudra, he will not be able to repeat the words mentioned above, when performing his achamanam, as they are taken from the Vedas, and none but a twice-born must take such holy words within his lips. The Sudra will sip the water and say Góvinda! Góvinda! or Siva! Siva! according as he is a Vaishnava, or a Siva, a worshipper of the god Vishnu, or of the god Siva.

SNAKE OMENS.

In a country like India where serpent worship is so common, the movements of these reptiles are looked upon as ominous. The vital statistics of the Indian Government show an annual loss of life by snake bite alone, averaging from twenty to twenty-five thousand. It is not then to be wondered at that the serpent

should inspire a dread which leads on to propitiatory worship. They thus form a natural subject for omens.

To see two snakes fighting denotes a quarrel between the beholder and his relatives; to see two snakes making off in the same direction forebodes poverty. One snake swallowing another is a sign of famine. It is a good omen to any one who sees a serpent climbing up a green tree, for he is sure to be an emperor. It is a sign of coming misfortune to a king, if he sees a snake climbing down from a tree; but the same thing is to other than kings a good omen. The entrance of a snake into a house denotes wealth to the householder; but just the reverse if it is seen departing from a house. If a cobra is seen with its hood expanded and its tail erect, going across from the left to the right, it is a good sign; if only its hood is expanded as it thus proceeds, it denotes a good meal for the beholder. If a snake comes towards a person from the right side it foretells success; but it is a bad sign if it should come from the left. If anyone sees a snake crawling about in the road in front of him, it denotes success to his projects; but evil will follow if the person halts. If when the snake sees anyone it expands its hood and erects its head, it foretells wealth and prosperity; but, if it crawls into its hole, it denotes wealth to the poor, but poverty to the rich. To see a dead snake lying on the ground foretells news of death. Should a farmer on arriving at a field see a cobra with hood expanded and head erect, it shows that the field will yield a good crop; but if it should crawl away on seeing him, it denotes a bad crop. It is a sign of a good crop, if a cobra is seen with hood expanded and head erect when the farmer is sowing his seed. A snake crawling into the entrance of a village denotes good to the villagers; but it denotes evil to them if it is seen running away from a village. To hear a serpent hiss on entering a village is a good omen; but when on a

journey it is bad to hear it hiss. If any one sees the trail of a snake on the ground, he must walk backwards along it, rubbing it out with his foot.

LIZARD OMENS.

There are two ways in which a lizard is supposed to exercise a good or an evil influence, and these are its cry and its falling upon anyone. With reference to the cry of a lizard it is said that, if on entering a town, anyone hears a lizard's cry coming from the left hand it denotes prosperity; but if it should be heard from the right it bespeaks delay in the accomplishment of the designs of him who hears it. If the cry is heard from the front, it is a good omen; but it is bad to hear it from behind. If a number of lizards cry out together, or if one should cry many times it is a good sign. If when any one is considering about any business a lizard's cry is heard from the right or from above, it bespeaks well for the hearer's designs; but it would denote disaster if it were heard from the left side.

Every dweller in India knows how universal the ordinary lizard is; it is everywhere both indoors and out. It is a very harmless thing and many of its ways are rather entertaining than otherwise; especially its dexterity in pouncing upon the insects which form its food. Many lizards are very pretty, and the effect is very pleasing when they are seen darting about in the sunlight, or along the white walls by lamplight. Some of them, it is true, are not so engaging in appearance; but others have most beautiful colours and markings, and their feeble little "tweet" "tweet" is by no means unpleasant to the ear, though not very musical. In its movements here, there and everywhere, up the walls, along the beams and in and out among the rafters, seeking what it may devour, the silly thing must very often go very carelessly, or else get giddy from

running along horizontal beams with its natural position reversed as to its legs and back. It is no unusual thing for it to fall on the floor, and to be stunned. It is, however, soon up again and off like a dart, as if nothing had happened. The Hindu has very superstitious notions about the fall of a lizard, that is, if it should happen to fall on his person; and he will try all he can to prevent such a thing happening. Although under certain conditions, such a fall may be a token of good, the chances to the contrary are so great as to make it worth while to take every precaution against such a contingency.

In a book on omens there is a list of no less than sixty-five places on the person which may forebode good or evil, if touched by a lizard in its fall. If it falls upon the centre of one's head, it forebodes a quarrel or disease; if on the temples, evil to one's brother; if on the front of the head, evil to oneself; if on the head covering, evil to males, death to females; if on the tips of one's hair, death; if on the right cheek, good for males, evil for females; if on the left cheek, good for females, evil for males and so on through the whole body right down to the toes, and even to the nails on the toes. For instance, if a lizard falls on the toes of the right foot, it denotes wealth; but if on the nails of the same foot, a quarrel; if on the edge of the nails of the same foot, annoyance or suffering is betokened. If in the fall it touches either the toes, or the nails, or the edge of the nails of the left foot, it is an omen of wealth and good fortune.

The chapter from which these remarks are taken concludes as follows: "Upon whatever part of the body a lizard may fall, it is the best thing to at once bathe and, having lit a lamp fed with oil, pray to a favourite god for the prevention of any evil that might otherwise happen." To this it may be objected that the omen

might be a good one, hence why this deprecatory action. The reply to this would probably be that, owing to the possible uncertainty as to the exact spot upon which the reptile alighted, it would be safer to assume that the omen is a bad one, and so at once provide for the possible contingency.

Separate information is given as to what is denoted by the fall of a chameleon—the large lizard usually called a bloodsucker. Strange to say, some of these omens are the opposite of those of the ordinary lizard. For instance, if a lizard falls on the nose, it betokens disease; whilst a fall of the chameleon on the same place foretells the cure of a disease. Enough, however, has been said to show what a very portentous creature a lizard is in the eyes of the Hindus, and to account for the anxiety they evince to prevent one, at any time, falling upon them.

CROW OMENS.

To one at all acquainted with the Indian crow, it is not at all a matter of surprise that the ways of that wily bird are thought to be highly ominous. The very glitter of its wicked beady black eye is suggestive of evil. The Hindus think, from the peculiar squinting way the crow has of looking at a thing—turning its head from side to side in a most uncanny fashion—that it can only see with one eye at a time, but that it has the power of transferring vision from one eye to the other at will. According to this theory, one eye must, for the time, be only a dummy. As may be expected, the crow is a proverbial bird amongst the Hindus. They say, for instance, "The crow's chick is dear to the crow," or, as the English proverb has it, "Even a beggar loves her brat"; "The crow is black at birth and black when grown," or, "What is bred in the bone will come out in the flesh"; "To kill crows and throw them to kites," or, "To rob Peter to pay Paul."

Though the crow is certainly interesting from some points of view, and perhaps in personal appearance somewhat deserving the high sounding name (corvus splendens) with which naturalists have endowed him, the moral character of the Indian crow is truly of the lowest. He is a very Ishmaelite amongst birds. For cunning craftiness, for untiring pertinacity, for fiendish cruelty, and outrageous impudence, perhaps no feathered creature in existence is its equal. The jackdaw of Rheims would be far behind in competition with it, either in cleverness or in wickedness. It is, therefore, perfectly natural that the crow should be placed in the Hindu list of creatures of augury. Thus, if on setting out for a journey a crow comes in front of a person and caws, it denotes the defeat of the object of the journey. If it caws first on the left hand side, and then on the right it shows that robbers may fall upon the traveller in the way; but if it caws first on the right side and then on the left, it foretells wealth and the accomplishment of one's. designs. If a crow caws on the left hand, and then follows after the person, it prognosticates an access of riches; but if, after cawing on the left hand, it comes towards one from the front, it foretells difficulties on the journey. On the other hand, this last omen is good for those who are not setting out on a journey. If a crow coming towards a person caws and then goes behind to the right, it foretells suffering from ulcers. If any-one is fortunate enough to see one crow feeding another, it bespeaks happiness to the beholder.

DOG OMENS.

The dog of the country, the ordinary "pariah" dog as it is called, is such a poor miserable thing that it is rather surprising to find so much space occupied with them in the book on omens. There are good dogs in India and sometimes specimens of really well-bred

creatures are seen. A thoroughbred brinjari dog or a really good poligar is an excellent animal and suits the country; but the dog of the East is a miserable creature, and the word dog is univerally used as a term of contempt. Such terms as "a lucky dog" or "a jolly dog," with the implied strain of compliment rather than reproach, are unknown in India, and probably the same may be said for the East generally.

It is a good sign, if a dog comes near anyone with a piece of old shoe in its mouth; and it bespeaks wealth to a person who sees a dog with some flesh in its mouth. If a dog passes by with a raw bone in its mouth it is a lucky sign; but if a dog has a burning stick or a dry bone in its mouth, it foretells death. If a dog enters a house with a dry bone in its mouth, the householder will be in great danger of death; if on so entering it has ropes, or leather straps in its mouth, it shows that the householder will be put into prison. It is good, if a dog comes from the right towards a person about to start on a journey; or if it should come towards him from the front when actually on a journey. If a dog shaking its ears jumps upon a traveller, or walks behind him treading in his footsteps, it denotes that difficulties may happen. When a dog stops a traveller in the way and prevents his proceeding, it means that he will fall among robbers or be stopped by enemies. If any one sees a dog scratching itself, it denotes disease to the beholder. Evil also will happen to anyone who sees a dog lying down with its tail cocked up. A journey is foretold to a person whose shoes a dog smells. It also predicts danger from enemies or from robbers if a dog smells a person's shoulders.

CAT OMENS.

A cat is evidently not thought to be such a very portentous creature, as but little is said about it in the book on omens. The following is a free translation

of all that is said there:—"Should a cat be in front of anyone when he may be considering any business, that business will not prosper. If anyone sees a cat, just on awaking in the morning nothing he may do that day will prosper. A cat coming towards anyone who is leaving home shows that the object he had in view will fail. Should a cat follow anyone who is leaving the house, the object in view will be accomplished without any hindrance. It is a good omen to hear a cat cry from the side towards the west."

JACKAL OMENS.

The jackal enters largely into Hindu fable; but very little is said of it from the omen point of view. The following are the chief things mentioned as portending good or evil. It is a good omen for a traveller when a jackal crosses over from the left to the right. It is also a good portent when a jackal's cry is heard from the east or the north; but it predicts great calamities if it cries exactly at midday. If it cries from the south or when turning towards the sun, evil will happen to the town or the army. If one jackal cries out towards the south in reply to another, it portends an execution by hanging; if it so cries in reply to another turning to the west, it bespeaks death by drowning. If a jackal cries out so loud as to deafen the ears of a person, but when another begins to cry, lessens its own cry, it foretells wealth and prosperity and also the safe return of friends and relatives who may have gone on a distant journey.

SNEEZING REGARDED AS AN OMEN.

A sneeze at the important rite of a marriage ceremony is regarded as an unpropitious sign.[1] If a good Hindu sneezes he snaps his fingers and then makes some earnest exclamation like chiranjeeva (live a long life) or shatáyussu (live for a hundred years) in order

[1] *Ante*, p. 106.

to avert any evil. It is said that to sneeze many times denotes the accomplishment of one's desires; it is also a good sign to cough after sneezing. On the other hand, it is a sign of evil to sneeze just once and then stop. A person must not blow his nose immediately after sneezing, as that would be a sign of death. After a single sneeze, or if a man unwittingly blows his nose immediately after sneezing, it is well to cease thinking about any business that may have been occupying his attention and immediately to lie down and be quiet for a time, having first expectorated; in this way the evil may be nullified. It is a good omen to hear sneezing when taking betel, or when about to take food, or upon going to bed. If when thinking about some important business, any one hears a fourfooted beast sneeze, or if such a thing occurs when he happens to be contemplating a journey, it would be a sign of death, or some equally great calamity. It is a good thing to get up whilst sneezing; but it is an omen of delay in one's business to sit down whilst doing so. It is a sign that his object will be accomplished, if he sneezes whilst holding in his hand bell-metal, copper, or gold; but it is the very opposite, if the metal in the hand should be of iron or silver.

It is good to hear young children, infants, prostitutes, pariahs, or the lame sneeze; but it is a sign that many troubles will happen to any one unfortunate enough to hear any of the following women sneeze:—a married woman, a widow, one who is blind, dumb, or maimed, a washerwoman, or one of the toddy drawer caste, a Mádiga (workers in leather) woman, a woman of the Yerukala caste (gypsies), or one carrying a burden. It is also a bad sign if a person when sneezing should happen to see a woman.

There is no importance to be attached to sneezes caused by snuff, red pepper, or a cold, nor to sneezing heard in the bazaar. Probably the reason for the latter

is because the small dust in the bazaar is often charged with particles of pungent articles like chillies and spices of various kinds; this is apt to cause sneezing which seems to be considered unnatural, and is, therefore, devoid of any import.

BIRD OMENS.

The flight of the Indian blue jay is consulted as an omen. It is an auspicious sign when birds fly from the left to the right, except in the case of the jay and the brahminy kite. It is a good omen when a jay flies from the right to the left, but bad when it flies from the left to the right. If it should sit in front of one, it is a good sign; if behind, it is a sign of evil. To see a jay to the east denotes evil to the beholder; to the south-east difficulties; to the south, or to the south-west, or the west wealth; to the north-west happiness; to the north, death; to the north-east, sorrow; if it appears on the right hand side it denotes health to the beholder.

If a brahminy kite flies from the right to the left, it denotes wealth and an abundant harvest; but when it flies from the left to the right it prognosticates evil. It is exceedingly auspicious to behold a kite flying from the right to the left with anything in the shape of prey in its bill. The sight of a jay, a kite, or a jackal, either together or apart, is said to be always propitious.

The king crow, a black long-tailed bird, rather small in size, is considered very clever by the Hindus. It is very swift in its flight, and may often be seen perched on the backs of cattle. Its Indian name is bháradvája. It is said of this bird: "If it is seen in front of anyone it bespeaks good, if the male bird passes a person from the right to the left, it foretells difficulties; but if the female so passes, the omen is a happy one; if the pair should so pass it is considered as very auspicious.

THE CHARACTERISTICS OF BREATHING.

The Hindus have a most curious idea with reference to breathing through the nose. They distinguish between breathing through the right and the left nostril. The right nostril is called súryanádi, or that of the sun, and the breath that comes through this is supposed to be comparatively warm; whilst the left nostril is called the chandranádi, or that of the moon, the breath coming through this being considered as comparatively cold. It is believed that a preponderance of breath comes through one nostril for a period of two hours, after which this preponderance changes to the other nostril. Not only so, but actions performed or things happening during one or other of these periods are thought to be influenced thereby. A list is given in the book on omens showing what it would be well should happen, or not happen, during the prevalence of either the súryanádi, or the chandranádi. There is said to be a book on this subject, "Svara Shastram;" but I have not been able to procure a copy. At six o'clock in the morning of the first day of a certain month in the year, the súryanádi commences and from this calculations can be made. When a man desires to consult this oracle he breathes hard down his nostrils on to the back of his hand, and having thus determined to his own satisfaction, by the excess in volume of the flow of breath from either nostril, the auspiciousness or otherwise of the time, he forms a judgment thereupon and, if action is called for, acts accordingly.

It is propitious if it is súryanádi, when first marching forth for war, or when commencing any important commercial transaction. It should be at this period that the marriage bath should take place (mangalasnánam) and also the ceremony at the coming together of a married pair when arrived at a suitable age (garbháthánam). It is well if during súryanádi food is

taken, or if a person should be frightened, or defeated in any way. It is a propitious sign at the commencement of any affliction. It is recommended that, on starting out for any of these enterprises, a person should start off first with the right foot.

Persons are advised to fix upon the period of chandranádi for setting forth on a journey, or for a marriage; for first putting on new jewels, or for commencing to plough the fields; for beginning to build a house, or to plant a garden. It is necessary to put the left foot first on starting out to do any of these things.

THE TINGLING OR THROBBING OF LIMBS OR MEMBERS.

There are no less than twenty-two parts of the human body, in which a tingling is auspicious, or otherwise. The throbbing of any part of the right hand side of the body is auspicious; whilst that of the left is less so. A throbbing of the centre of the top of the head bespeaks good food, and that of the nose is also a good sign. A throbbing of the right cheek is ominous of evil coming from a ruler, whilst that of the left cheek shows that employment will come. It is a good thing, therefore, said an Indian friend to me, if on setting out to seek for employment one should have a tingling sensation in the left cheek. The list goes on downwards from the eyes to the lips and chin and thence on to the shoulders, the chest and the arms, right down to the feet. The tingling of the calf of the leg foretells the possession of jewels, and that of the sole of the foot happiness generally.

YAWNING.

Yawning is not properly speaking regarded as an omen, but Hindus have some very peculiar ideas about it. It is thought that when a person yawns, the life may leave the body; whether merely from the effects

of the spasmodic action, or from any other cause is not clear. Hence it is usual on yawning, to snap the fingers and say Krishna! Krishna! or Siva! Siva! in order to avert any evil that may otherwise result. So strong is the belief that the life may leave the body through a hearty yawn, that 'to yawn' is sometimes used as a euphemism for 'to die.' If a baby yawns, the mother, or someone near, who has observed it, snaps the fingers saying, Krishna! Krishna! or Siva! Siva!

It is probable that the superstitious ideas with reference to yawning, and sneezing[1] also, had their origin in the fact that any spasmodic action may be of itself physically somewhat dangerous. This presumption is strengthened from the fact that a slókam on the subject also includes falling down. It is as follows:—

क्षुतपातन जृंभेषु । जीवोत्तिष्ठांगुलिध्वनिः ।
गुरोरपि च कर्तव्यं । प्राणधारणसिद्धये ॥

"On sneezing, falling, or yawning,
Snap the fingers and say, live! arise!
It is fit even for a younger to do this to an elder.
This is for the reviving."

The third line in the verse is an allusion to the well-known impropriety of a younger person presuming to bless an older one. In the three possible events mentioned, the danger is considered such as to warrant this departure from what is ordinarily considered to be right and proper.

There are many more omens; but I have given enough to show how the Hindu people are tied and bound with the chains of superstition. Doubtless there are many who pay little heed to these things;

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[1] It is obligatory on a Musalman who sneezes to say at once, Al-hamdu'lláh—God be praised: the answer given by his companion is "God have mercy upon you." Herklot, "Qanún-i-Islám," p. 284.

but, taking the people as a whole, this belief in omens is universally prevalent throughout the country, and exercises great sway over the daily life of the masses. The material harm this superstition does is great, for a fatalistic belief in impending evil often brings about its own fulfilment by paralyzing the endeavour that might prevent it.

CHAPTER XV.

HINDU ORNAMENTS.

आभरणम्. (Ábharanam).

"A wife being gaily adorned, her whole house is embellished; but, if she be destitute of ornament, all will be deprived of decoration." (Manu, iii. 63.)

Probably in no country in the world is the love of personal ornament so manifest as it is in India. The sight of the great princes in full gala dress is a dream of brightness and wealth; and even the poorest day labourer manages to possess some ornament, if it is only a silver, or even copper ring for his finger, or toe. This passion for jewels hinders a true advance in the welfare of the country. Money which properly circulated would add infinitely to the comfort of the individual, and to the welfare of the community, is locked up in jewels that lie utterly unproductive of good, and are a cause of anxiety. Any little extra gain and savings are almost invariably invested in jewels. The owner is happy if on gala days he can adorn himself, or his family with so much jewellery; and he likes to be spoken of as a man possessing so many rupees worth of the same. A man's wealth is often spoken of as the possession of so much in jewels. Even a domestic servant, or day labourer, will have his little savings melted down and made into an ornament for himself, or for one of his family. Such people, when remonstrated with, will say it is a good investment,

for when a rainy day comes the money-lender will always give a loan on jewels as a security. A Telugu proverb says: "Jewels worn for ornament will be useful in times of difficulty." Such people cannot be brought to understand what an improvement there would be to health, and domestic happiness, if the money thus buried were expended in bettering the miserable condition of the house or surroundings, or in providing better food for the family; nor do they see the positive gain that might be derived from properly laying out the money, instead of carrying it to the melting pot of the goldsmith. Hindu men adorn themselves in this way more than those of Western countries do; but it is the women who wear the most ornaments. It is not a question only of her personal appearance; for her dignity and status amongst her friends and neighbours depend very much upon the amount and value of the ornaments she wears. When women meet at the village well or tank for a chat, jewels usually form a prominent subject of conversation, in the same way as dress is supposed to occupy a large share of the conversation amongst women in Western lands.

Jewels are often a subject of quarrels in Indian households. If one member has more than another, the wife than the sister or the sister-in-law, or the reverse, the peace of the good man of the house is often disturbed and the household is divided. This state of things has, in fact, become proverbial. There is a Sanskrit saying current which ironically expresses this:—"Namaskáram (obeisance) to gold which creates enmity between mother and son;" and a Telugu proverb says: "Even though the brother-in-law has to go to prison, the elder sister must have her anklets."

Some personal ornament is necessary for it is said:—"There must always be at least a speck of gold on the person in order to ensure personal ceremonial

purity." Most Hindus contrive to have some jewel, however small, somewhere or other upon their person, either in the nose or the ear, or on the arm or hand. According to rule, a youth until he is married ought not to wear any ornaments at all; but, as a matter of fact, they do and little boys are often ornamented nearly as much as little girls. Those who have performed a yajnam sacrifice, and who thereby become entitled to the proud title of somayájulu, are allowed, as a mark of personal distinction, to wear a certain kind of ear-ring and three peculiar shaped rings on their fingers. These jewels at once proclaim to the initiated the spiritual rank of the wearer.

The goldsmith guild, or rather caste, is a very distinct one and there seems always plenty of work for its members to do. The ordinary Indian distrusts the goldsmith and takes trusty friends to watch the process of his piece of gold being made into an ornament for his wife. Popular sayings are:—"The jewel belongs to the wearer, but the gold remains with the jeweller." "A goldsmith will steal a scrap of his mother's nose-ring."[1] The workmanship is somewhat crude and there is a want of finish, as compared with work of European manufacture; but it is all hand work and done with the simplest tools. Yet what is lacking in finish is made up in beauty of design. If a new jewel should be required, the customer does not go to a jeweller's shop and select the article from a varied stock as in Europe. The designs are well known. The customer must take gold or silver or gems with him, and the goldsmith will work up the materials thus brought. Sometimes the workman goes to the house of the customer and does the work there. Nobles and other men of wealth keep workmen constantly employed in making, or altering, or repairing ornaments. The gold or silver that is taken to be worked

[1] Crooke, "Natives of Northern India," p. 130.

up is almost invariably in the shape of silver or gold coins. This is a great drain upon the currency. In the Presidency towns there are shops kept where things are exposed for sale, as in Europe; but that is not according to the ways of the country people.

The metal employed in Indian jewellery is, as a rule, good of its kind. There is no pinchbeck or plated-ware. The outer covering of gold or silver may be very thin, and the inside mere lead; but what is seen is pure of its kind. The gems worn by the lower orders are often false, but the setting is almost invariably of pure gold or silver.

Men have the ear, both the different parts of the outer rim and the lobe, pierced for various kinds of ornaments. They also have the nose pierced for a small jewel. It may be done in either one of the nostrils, or in the division between the two. They often wear gold or silver beads round the neck which are sometimes used as a rosary. It is very common to wear a silver or gold belt round the waist. This is often made in circular or square plates, joined together; each plate being either plain or ornamented with embossed or raised work. Even an ordinary coolie, or labourer, may be seen wearing one of these silver belts. Men also wear bracelets on the upper arm and on the wrist; the latter sometimes beautifully ornamented. They wear more rings on the fingers than the females do, and sometimes the gems in these rings are very valuable. Probably the most valuable part of a man's ornaments are the gems in his ear-rings, and finger rings. A man may have very little on in the shape of clothing, whilst the lobes of his ears are ornamented with diamonds of great value. Sometimes, too, a man has a ring on his big toe. There is an idea that it is beneficial to health, for a toe ring is said to benefit impaired energies.

There is a peculiar custom prevalent amongst the

Hindus, when a child is born to a married pair after a long time, or one survives after several have died in infancy. In such a case, especially if it be a boy, but also sometimes in the case of a girl, the parents will beg money from their friends and neighbours, or even from strangers—the money must be obtained in this way—and with what is realized, they get small jewels made for the ear and the nose, to be worn as amulets. It must at least be enough for one ear and one nostril; but if sufficient is obtained to meet the cost, both ears and both nostrils are thus ornamented. When these are once put on, they are never removed. Great danger would be incurred by removing these charms. It is very dangerous for a visitor to praise the ornaments of a child. "Praise of this kind is believed to bring a nemesis with it, or it may suggest the envious glance of the malignant."[1]

The ornaments for women are naturally far more numerous. There are no less than twelve different kinds for the head alone. Probably this does not exhaust the list, but these are those in ordinary use, either for gala days or for every-day wear. There is an ornament called the betel-leaf, made of gold, ornamented with little balls along its edges, and worn on the top of the head towards the front. Another ornament made into the shape of the petal of a certain Indian flower is worn just behind it. Next comes a large circular ornament named after the Indian chrysanthemum, and placed at the end of the chignon, which is worn at the side and not at the back of the head. A golden sun-flower, with a crescent attached to it by links, is put on the crown of the head. These four ornaments are in ordinary wear by well-to-do females; those hereafter mentioned are, as a rule, only worn on gala days. An ornament, shaped like an inverted Λ, sometimes set with pearls, is worn on

[1] Crooke, "Natives of Northern India," p. 178.

the forehead, the angle being attached to the hair in a line with the parting. Pendant from this is a locket adorned with pearls. On the hair in front and just between the Λ shaped ornament and the betel-leaf shaped one are two jewels; the one on the right is called the sun, and the one on the left, being of a crescent shape, is named the moon. Both of these are sometimes adorned with precious stones. There is also a kind of gold buckle worn on the side of the chignon, which is used for attaching to it any artificial hair that may be necessary to make the bunch of the approved size and appearance. An ornament like a chrysanthemum with an emerald in the centre is also worn on the chignon.

On great occasions, such as her wedding day or other gala days, a Hindu lady may have all these ornaments on at the same time. There are two head ornaments that are worn instead of those on the chignon, when the wearers are young girls. Their hair is plaited into a tail, hanging straight down behind, and beautified with a long ornament of gold, often set with precious stones. At the end of this yet another article is attached, consisting of a bunch of gold ball-like ornaments fastened on with silk.

Strange as it may seem to Western ideas, ornaments are frequently attached to the nose by Hindu ladies. Each nostril and the cartilage between the two are pierced, and some one or other of the following ornaments are attached to the nose. First, there is a pendant from the centre, hanging down over the upper lip. In the middle of this ornament there is a stone of some kind and pendant from that again is a pearl. Into one of the nostrils a short pin with a precious stone as a head is put. A pendant pearl is attached to it. Into the other nostril a flower-shaped jewel of gold and small pearls may be put. These three jewels are in ordinary daily wear by those who can

afford them. For high days and holidays, a ring, sometimes as large round as a rupee, and ornamented with pearls, or precious stones, is worn in one of the nostrils; whilst in the other may be a flower-like jewel of smaller size. A half-moon shaped ornament is also attached to a nostril. It is not possible to have all these on at one and the same time; but a fair number can be thus worn together.

There are at least four parts of the ear, and sometimes even more, that are pierced to enable the various ornaments to be attached to it. I have a list of fifteen different kinds of ear-jewels, all known by different names. Some are of ornamented gold, whilst others are richly set with gems and pearls, according to the means of the owner. Some are for the lobe of the ear and some for the tip and middle of the outer rim, each place being pierced for the purpose. There is also a hole pierced in the little prominence in front of the external opening of the ear which is made to serve the purpose of holding a jewel.

The variety of neck ornaments is very great. I have the names of twenty-four. The style and quality differ very largely. Some are tight bands, fitting close round the neck, usually composed of flat gold beads or tablets strung together on silken or other cord. Amongst poorer people the gold beads are alternated with those of coloured glass. Some of the neck ornaments are loose hanging chains. A very favourite neck jewel is composed of gold coins, English or Australian sovereigns, or French five or ten franc pieces, or the old Indian gold mohur.

There are jewels for the upper part of the arm and for the wrists. Those for the upper part are like bracelets of various kinds. Some are like chains and some are merely plain bands, whilst others are beautifully embossed in various patterns. Others are ornamented with precious stones.

Those who, from poverty or any other cause, cannot obtain any jewels whatever, have glass bangles. To be without these is a mark of widowhood. It is a universal rule that Hindu females, from their very childhood, should wear these glass bangles; to be deprived of them would be a great disgrace. A widow may wear gold bracelets, but not glass ones. A little infant of a month old has one or two glass bangles put on its little wrist by the fond mother, and the number increases with the age of the child. Some females wear a few, whilst others have on a dozen or more, nearly covering the arm from the wrist upwards. An angry woman will sometimes smash all her loved bangles before her husband's face. Such an act is as much as saying, "I would I were a widow," and it is a very dreadful thing to do. Common bangles will sell at about four for one anna (one penny), whilst the better ones are half-an-anna or an anna each. The colours vary, black, blue and green being the usual ones. As a rule, the same colours are worn indifferently by all classes, the better class people having the finer and more expensive kinds. There are, however, a few varieties affected by some of the castes. The females of the cowherd caste, for instance, usually wear a peculiar kind in which the ground is black, but ornamented with green spots or streaks. The toddy drawer caste, again, have a particular kind. In addition to the glass bangles, it is usual for coloured ones made of lac to be worn, two on each arm; that is, the first and last bangle is usually one of this kind, the glass ones being between. The cost of these is more than that of those made of glass, and they are ornamented with various colours and bits of glass, so as to produce a very pretty effect. The ordinary glass bangles often break and periodically require to be renewed. The bangle-man is a well-known person and may constantly be met, with his strings of bangles over

his shoulder. He has his usual rounds and appears to meet with a very hearty welcome. The bangles are put on by the bangle-man, and it seems a very painful process for the poor female. She sits on the ground in front of the manipulator, and he, seated tailor fashion, takes her hand in his, and begins the operation, kneading and pressing with practised fingers. He now and then soothes the sufferer by pointing out the beauty that will be the result of the pain. The wonder is, the circles being so small, how they can be got over the hand at all; but the Hindu hand is very supple, and the operator knows how to press and squeeze so as to accomplish his purpose. The painful operation must, however, be done, and the sooner it is over and the less fuss made about it the better. The lac bangle is not put on over the hand in this way; it is cut and pressed open and, after a piece or two has been snipped off to make it the proper size, the ends are heated and pressed together when they readily join. When a female has in this way had her bangles renewed, she makes obeisance to the bangle-man and also to his stock in trade.

The ornaments hitherto enumerated are ordinarily made of gold, the glass bangles excepted. The body or inner part of the jewel may be of copper or lead, especially in the larger sized ones; but silver is only worn by poor people. The women of the Lambardis and some other gypsy tribes are ornamented in the most profuse and barbarous fashion. Full blown flower-like silver ornaments, with numerous small globular pendants tinkling softly like little bells fall over their hair; large and heavy bracelets of brass, or ivory, or even painted wood are on their wrists. Their heavy brass anklets, which are hollow and contain little pellets, give out a tinkling sound as they walk along. The dress of these women is quite different from that of ordinary Hindu females; it is very picturesque, and

even grotesque, in its shape and material. There is a lavish ornamentation of beads and cowry shells sewn on to the close fitting jacket and to the bag-like pockets, which dangle at the side of their parti-coloured skirts. Though picturesque, it is all very dirty and looks as though a change of raiment were a luxury seldom or never indulged in.

The ornaments for the female waist, legs and feet are more often made of silver than of gold, especially the anklets and toe rings. A broad zone of gold or silver, with clasps, is worn round the waist by those who can afford it. This is sometimes plain and sometimes ornamented with raised work. The effect is very pleasing in contrast with the bright coloured raiment which picturesquely envelopes the figure. The anklets are of various shapes and sizes. Some are circular, like the bracelets for the wrists, whilst others are formed so as to curve over the ankles. Some are chains, whilst others have attached to them a number of little bells which tinkle tinkle with a soft and pleasant sound, as the wearer moves about. Silver rings of various kinds are worn on the toes. There must always be one ring on the middle toe of one or both feet. If through extreme poverty a silver ring cannot be obtained for this toe, then one of bell-metal will be used instead. The shape of these rings for the toes of females differs from that of those for men, in that they are usually shaped like two or three twists of wire; hence the Telugu name for women's toe rings is tsuttu, which means a twist round. Married women wear a peculiar shaped ring on the fourth toe which has an embossed ornament on the top. Men's toe rings are more like ordinary finger rings, except that they are not joined underneath so that they can be pulled open and pressed together again, when put on or taken off.

All these ornaments are not worn at one and the same time, but it is astonishing how many jewels can

be crowded on to the person. The dress of a woman is not very elaborate as to quantity or shape. A cloth or sári of some delicate material and lovely colour, beautifully embroidered in fine gold, gracefully enfolds the figure; and this, together with a short tight-fitting bodice, forms the chief article of clothing, properly so called. There is no head covering other than the end of the sári thrown gracefully over the head so as to conceal the face at will. The lack of variety in garments is, however, made up by the number and value of the glittering jewels, which seem to occupy every available space, and which must, in spite of their beauty, be rather heavy and cumbersome to the wearer. So imperative is it at weddings that the bride should be decked out in jewels, that they are freely borrowed and as freely lent by the neighbours and friends upon so important an occasion.

This open display of valuables is a great temptation to the lawless, and deeds of violence are often done to get the jewels of the victim. On journies, especially in the common bullock cart of the country, robbers attack travellers for the sake of their jewels. In secluded places near to towns or villages, or even in the open streets, jewel-snatchers often manage to secure valuable booty. Little children are sometimes decoyed and sometimes even murdered for the sake of their jewels. Children, without a thread of clothing, may be seen playing about with bracelets or necklets of value, or ornaments of some kind or other on their little brown bodies.

It is an old world notion that magic properties are attached to certain gems, and this idea has been systematized by the Hindus. It is called "the test of precious stones;" but the testing is largely confined, to the luckiness or otherwise of the particular gem and has nothing to do with its intrinsic value. Nine

kinds of precious stones are enumerated, and mention is made of the deity, or planet with which each is connected. It is stated that the wearer of a particular gem receives the blessing of its patron deity. Thus, rubies are the favoured of the sun; diamonds of Venus; pearls of the moon; emeralds of Budhudu, the son of the moon; sapphires of Saturn; cats-eyes of the dragon's tail, or descending node of the moon; topazes of Jupiter; coral of the ascending node of the moon; and the agate of Mars.

Six kinds of rubies are enumerated, each of which is said to bring misfortune to the wearer. A ruby, with milky layers enveloping it, is said to bring poverty to the wearer; one with a broken ray in it will cause quarrels and disputes; one chipped will make enmity between relatives; one full of cracks will plunge the wearer into sorrows for ever; one with many flaws will endanger the life of the wearer; one rough and dark in colour will be sure to cause evils. It is advisable to avoid either of these six kinds. It is also said that rubies containing two or three round spots are not lucky. It is not advisable to cast one's eyes upon such a stone on awaking in the morning. It is most lucky to wear good and pure rubies; the sun, their patron, will bless the wearer with wealth and prosperity.

Diamonds are divided into four classes, or castes. Those that are pure white are said to be of the Brahmin caste, and bestow great benefits upon the wearer. Those that are red, are of the Kshatriya caste, and bestow upon the wearer the power of eliciting the obedience of his fellowmen. Those that are yellow, are of the Banyan caste, and bestow prosperity generally. Those that are black, are of the Sudra caste, and mean ruin to the wearer. When a diamond contains shining streaks, resembling the feet of a crow, it will cause the death of the wearer.

If a pure diamond is worn, Venus, its patron, will bless the wearer with the comforts of life.

There are said to be nine places in which pearls are found. In the clouds; this kind is said to be oval in shape, and to be worn by the gods. In the head of a serpent; these are said to be like a small red seed, and to have the quality of relieving their wearers from all troubles. In the hollow of a bamboo; these are said to be black in colour, and to give the wearer certain attractions. In a fish; these are white in colour, and protect the wearer from danger by fire. In the head of an elephant; these are yellowish green and should be worn by kings. In a sugar cane; this kind is of a reddish colour and is said to have the power of causing all, even kings and queens, to be subjected to the will of the wearer. In a conch shell; these are said to be like a dove's egg, but they cannot be obtained by ordinary men; it requires a knowledge of mantrams, or of magic, to get them. In the tusk of a wild boar; this kind is red in colour, and is in size like the régu fruit (ziziphus jujuba); it will bring fame to the wearer. In the pearl oyster; of these there are said to be three kinds, of a reddish, a golden, or a white colour. The moon, the patron of pearls, will bless a wearer of pure pearls with fame and the pleasures of life.

Emeralds are said to be of eight classes according to their colour. Poisons have no power over those persons who wear a good emerald. It gives protection against the power of the evil eye; and develops the mental faculties. Emeralds also have the power of protecting the wearer of one from the designs of foes, from sorrows, madness, internal pains, swoons and various diseases of the liver. A sure access to heaven is promised to that one who freely gives an emerald to a Brahmin.

Sapphires are divided into three classes according to the depth of their colour. There are also six kinds that are said to bring evil to the wearer; such evils as quarrels with relatives, loss of children, hazard to life, certain death within a year. A sapphire is purest when, if placed in milk, it gives to the milk a bluish tinge. It is then a true sapphire. A sapphire is said to be electric, when a blade of grass will adhere to it though blown upon. Such a stone is said to bring lustre to the wearer. The planet Saturn, the patron of sapphires, will bless the wearer of a true sapphire with prosperity and immunity from death.

The topaz is described as having a colour like a drop of dew on a flower, and its patron deity, Jupiter, will bless the wearer with immense wealth.

Four kinds of coral are enumerated that will cause evil to the wearer, troubles, grief, disease, and death. There are six kinds of good coral mentioned, according to the colour, and the wearer of such is promised the pleasures of life and the accomplishment of his designs.

The blessing of Mars is promised to the wearer of an agate, which blessing ensures wealth and prosperity.

The details given in this chapter, have, I think, served to show how strong the passion for jewels is amongst the Hindus. One of the most hopeful signs of the times is that the more thoughtful Hindus are venturing to raise their voice against this and other social evils. There is hope, that, as reforms have begun in other directions, so something may be done here to contract within legitimate bounds that love of display, which, though innocent in itself, causes so much evil and loss, when carried to such extremes as I have now described.

I have now given an account of many of the customs of the Hindu people and have shown how much

superstition has entered into the religion of their daily life; but the fact is that the Hinduism of the present day is not the religion of the Aryans as they brought it with them into India. It is a mixture in which the new has so absorbed and assimilated the old with which it came in contact, and has been so influenced by it, as to have become, at least as far as the outward expression of it is concerned, a very different, if not a new religion. This is more perceptible in Southern India, where the Aryans did not penetrate in numbers sufficient to allow their religious system to overpower the old cults which they found flourishing there. In these Southern parts, amongst large sections of the community, the so-called Hinduism of to-day is more Dravidian than Aryan in its ulterior origin.

Mr. Mayne, when speaking of Hindu Law, makes some remarks that may very well be applied here to the Hindu religion. He says: "When the Aryans penetrated into India, they found there a number of usages either the same or not wholly unlike their own. They accepted these, with or without modifications, rejecting only those that were incapable of being assimilated, such as polyandry, incestuous marriages and the like. The latter lived on a merely local life, while the former because incorporated among the customs of the ruling race .... I think it is impossible to imagine that any body of usage could have obtained general acceptance throughout India, merely because it was inculcated by Brahmin writers, or even because it was held by the Aryan tribes. In Southern India, at all events, it seems clear that neither Aryans nor Brahmins ever settled in sufficient numbers to produce any such result. We know the tenacity with which Eastern races cling to their customs, unaffected by the example of those who live near them. We have no reason to suppose that the Aryans in India ever attempted to force their usages

upon the conquered races, or that they could have succeeded in doing so, if they had tried."[1]

It is not difficult to see how closely that which may be said of the legal aspect of the case applies also to the religions. Hinduism is but a reflection of the mixed character of the inhabitants of India, not one race but many and each with its own peculiar characteristics. Aryanism undoubtedly brought great religious changes, but it gradually settled down and accommodated itself to circumstances. What it could not break down it incorporated, and yet it was so well managed that the Brahmins ever occupied the seat of authority. The outcome is the Hinduism of to-day. Nothing exemplifies this more clearly than the history of Buddhism. Gautama the son of a petty prince somewhere on the confines of Oude and Nepaul in the 5th or 6th century B.C., founded a religion that spread over India with such irresistible power as to threaten the extinction of Brahminism. This overwhelming force, being met in that accommodating spirit of compromise which is the characteristic of Hinduism, was itself finally absorbed into the all-embracing Hindu system. Gautama Buddha was elevated by the astute Brahmins to the position of the ninth incarnation of Vishnu, and Buddhism as a distinct cult became, practically, extinct throughout the length and breadth of the land.

Still, the religious disposition of the Hindus, often crude and superstitious, is a ground of hope for better things. None but a people with the strongest religious instincts could possibly have borne for so many ages the accumulated burdens prescribed by their religions; and when the tide, now so perceptibly on the turn, begins to flow freely with its irresistible and ever-increasing force, and when the mixture of Aryanism and Brahmanism, Buddhism and Demonolatry, the highest

[1] Mayne, "Treatise on Hindu Law and Usage." (1, § 5. 6.)

philosophical conceptions and spiritual aspirations, with a pandering to the lowest instincts of human nature, a combination forming what is now called Hinduism; when all this shall have given place to a simpler ritual and the purer Faith of the one true Incarnation, then the religious life of India will assume a form which even now we can begin to contemplate with joyful anticipation.

"For from the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same shall My name be great among the Gentiles; and in every place incense shall be offered unto My name, and a pure offering; for My name shall be great among the heathen saith the Lord of hosts." (Malachi i. 11.)

APPENDIX.

ON SOCIAL REFORM

SINCE the first edition of this book was issued, a movement for social reform has been going on, more or less vigorously, in India. All that I have stated about the various superstitions and ceremonies is correct as regards the great mass of the people; but I gladly record the fact that amongst some of the more educated men there is a feeling that the restrictions of caste and custom are not only irksome, but are a hindrance to the real progress of the people. Hindu social customs have a religious basis and so all religious reformers from Ram Mohun Roy downwards have tried to modify the force of these customs. It is generally agreed that there is a real desire amongst a small but important section of educated men for reform; but it is said that the practical outcome of much talking and writing is small. Still, anything is better than stagnation and it is not to be expected that customs, which have their root in ages long gone by, can suddenly be uprooted. It is very difficult for a non-Hindu to realize the dead weight of opposition a reformer has to contend with and, if he is slow in realizing the ideal he has set before himself, we should not blame him or think that his work, imperfect it may be, is altogether useless. Rather, should we be thankful for all that is said and appreciative of the little that is done.

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There can be no large movement till public opinion has been educated and this the leaders in the movement are trying to do, by Conferences, by correspondence in the newspapers and by the issue of social reform literature. In June, 1907, a social reform Conference for South India was held in Vizagapatam. The resolutions adopted show exactly the questions which are under discussion. They are as follows :—

The Education of Women.

Resolved—" That this Conference regrets that the education of women is not making rapid progress, and impresses on all interested in the advancement of the Hindu community the necessity of taking earnest steps for its spread."

The Age of Marriage.

Resolved—" That this Conference reiterates its emphatic conviction that no amelioration in the condition of Hindu Society is possible so long as the pernicious custom of premature marriage is permitted to prevail. In the opinion of the Conference it should be sternly discouraged by public opinion and efforts should be made by enlightened members of the several castes to revert to the sounder and more authoritative practice of post-puberty marriages; or, at all events, the marriageable age of girls should be raised to at least twelve and that of boys to at least eighteen, the consummation of marriage being postponed till the ages of fourteen and twenty at least."

Fusion of Sub-Castes.

Resolved—" That this Conference urges that the existing restrictions on inter-dining and inter-marriage among the various sub-castes should be speedily removed, as the progress of Hindu society is considerably hindered thereby."

Foreign Travel.

Resolved—" That this Conference urges that no difficulties should be placed in the way of the re-admission into society of Hindus who visit foreign countries, as over-

sea travels to foreign lands have become absolutely necessary for national progress in almost every sphere."

Enforced Widowhood.

Resolved—"That this Conference again draws attention to the injustice and the practical evils of the custom of enforced widowhood and urges that it should be discountenanced, at least, in the case of girl-widows."

Elevation of Low Castes.

Resolved—"That this Conference most earnestly calls upon all enlightened Hindus to accelerate in all possible ways the social amelioration of the depressed castes."

"Kanyasulkam" and "Varasulkam."

Resolved—"That this Conference views with great disfavour the practices of *Kanyasulkam* and *Varasulkam*, which degrade marriage to a mercenary transaction, and calls upon the Hindus to discourage them by all possible means."

Disfigurement of Girl-Widows.

Resolved—"That this Conference strongly reprobates the cruel practice of disfigurement of Hindu widows, even before they pass the stage of girlhood, and calls upon all caste and reform organizations, as well as the religious heads of the community, to arrange for the infliction of social penalties on those responsible for such practice."

Total Abstinence and Social Purity.

Resolved—"That this Conference insists, as a condition precedent to all progress, on the necessity of total abstinence from intoxicants and of the strict observance of purity, individual and social."

Regulation of Public Charity.

Resolved—"That in the opinion of this Conference the increase of population and the growing poverty of the country make it incumbent on the community to regulate with discrimination the existing system of public charity, so as to diminish the incentives to idleness and pauperism, without at the same time creating indifference to cases of real distress."

GLOSSARY

OF

HINDU TERMS.

Abbharnam	Ornaments.
Achamanam	A threefold sipping of water.
Achâryas	A Vaishnava sect.
Advaita	Non-Dual. Pantheism.
Agni Karyam	Fire worship.
Áhára	Diet.
Akshatam	Coloured rice used in religious ceremonies.
Amávásya	The new moon.
Ammur	The Toda heaven.
Angáram	A black mark forming part of the face mark of a Madhavá.
Anantasashayagam	The everlasting couch. A bier.
Appaginta	The final giving over of the bride to the bridegroom and his family.
Arya	Noble. The predominent Hindu race.
Arivéni	Coloured earthen pot.
Ashtáksharam	Cabalistic figures drawn at a Mala funeral.
Ashúshi	Ceremonial defilment. Mourning.
Asthihátra	An earthen vessel in which the remains of calcined bones are preserved from the funeral pyre until they can be ceremonially disposed of.

Aum or Om	... A word typifying the Hindu Trinity, Brahma, Vishnu and Siva.
Badagas	... A tribe living on the Nilgiri Hills, South India.
Banyan / Banian	... Shopkeeper or merchant.
Bangle	... Bracelet.
Básikam	... Ornament for the forehead.
Bháradvája	... The king crow.
Bháshikam	... Wedding ornament.
Bhur	... Earth.
Bhuvah	... Sky.
Bhokas	... The Brahmins who at ceremonies for the dead are fed vicariously for the departed spirit.
Brahmalókam ...	... The heaven of Brahma.
Bramáchári	... Unmarried student.
Brinjári	... Wandering Indian tribe of carriers.
Chackra	... Wheel.
Chandranádi	... Left nostril.
Chatty	... Large earthenware pot.
Chiranjeeva	... An exclamation, meaning, "live a long life."
Chinnadinam ...	... The little day, a certain day in the days of the funeral ceremonies.
Chuckler	... Worker in leather. Shoemaker.
Choultry	... Public lodging-place.
Conjee	... Gruel.
Cudimi	... The sacred top-knot.
Darbha	... Sacred grass much used in Hindu ceremonies (Poa-cynosurroides).

Daṣara	Festival in honour of Durga, the wife of Siva.
Dásari	Pariah priest.
Devátárchana	Worship of the gods.
Dígála	A hawking game.
Dhál	Dish made of one of the pulses.
Dharma karta	Temple patron.
Dharma Shástra	Code of rules for daily life.
Durgá	Name of the wife of Siva.
Dvaita	Dual. God and matter are distinct.
Dvija	Twice-born. A member of the high castes entitled to wear the sacred thread.
Ekávhanam	A ceremony by which a Brahmin at a funeral takes upon himself the sins of the deceased.
Gada	Club.
Ganisha	The son of Siva. The causer and the remover of obstacles.
Garbháthánam	The ceremony of the coming together of a married couple when of suitable age.
Gauri	The wife of Siva.
Gáyatri	Hindu invocation or prayer.
Ghee	Clarified butter.
Gnánam	Wisdom. Knowledge.
Gódánam	Gift or offering of a cow.
Gopádam	Footprint of a cow.
Gópichandanam	Yellow clay used for one of the sacred marks.
Govinda	A name of Krishna.
Gruhastha	Married house-holder.
Hara	A name of Siva.
Hari	A name of Vishnu.
Hanuman	The monkey god.

Hómam ... ... Sacrifice with fire. A burnt offering.

In'ám ... ... Gift. A free-hold grant of land.
Irulas ... ... Hill tribe on the Nilgiri Hills.
Iyengars ... ... A Vaishnava sect (Tamil).

Jangams ... ... A Siva sect. Mendicants.
Ját ... ... Sort, tribe, caste.
Jivanamaskáram ... ... The ceremony of administering the panchagavyam to a person.
Jyotishka ... ... Astrologer.

Kákapuksham ... ... Crow's wing. Name of a mode of wearing the hair.
Kalasam ... ... Vase. Water pot.
Kallans ... ... A caste in South India.
Kaliyuga ... ... The present degenerate life.
Karma karta ... ... The near relative who performs the funeral ceremonies.
Karta ... ... The lord or director. The representative mourner at a funeral.
Katnam ... ... Gifts to aid in the funeral expenses.
Kanyádánam ... ... The giving away of the bride at a wedding.
Kéd ... ... Receptacle in which the skull and bones of a Toda corpse are temporarily kept.
Khadgam ... ... Sword.
Komati ... ... Shopkeeper. Merchant.
Kotas ... ... A tribe on the Nilgiri Hills.
Krutayugam ... ... The first and most holy age.
Krishnajayanti ... ... The festival or birthday of Krishna.
Kshatriyas ... ... The second or warior caste.
Kunkuma ... ... Red powder.

Lakshmí ... ... Name of the wife of Vishnu.

Lambardies ... ... A migratory tribe.
Lingahari }
Lingait } ... ... A worshipper of the lingam.
Lingam ... ... Emblem of Siva.

Madhvas ... ... A Vishnu sect.
Madi ... ... Ceremonial purity.
Madiga ... ... Worker in leather. Chuckler.
Malas ... ... Name of Telugu Pariahs.
Ma'múl ... ... Custom.
Mánava Dharma ... ... Code of Manu.
Mangalasútram ... ... Marriage bath.
Manalashtakam ... ... Wedding chant.
Mangalasútram ... ... Gold ornament worn round the neck as a sign of mourning.
Mantram ... ... Form of words taken from the Vedas and used as a spell or incantation.
Maravas ... ... A primitive tribe in South India.
Margosa ... ... Neem tree.
Mathuparkam ... ... A mixture made of milk, ghee, sugar and honey.
Moduga ... ... Indian tree (Butea frondosa).
Móksham ... ... Absorption into the Supreme.
Murthya ... ... This world.

Nakabali ... ... Sacrifice at a wedding.
Nakshaktram ... ... Name of a star. Constellation. One of the twenty-seven lunar mansions.
Nairs ... ... A tribe on the West Coast of India.
Namah ... ... A salutation.
Namaskáram ... ... Hindu obeisance made with hands closed.
Nandi ... ... The bull which is the vehicle of Siva. A stone image of this bull.
Nitya karma ... ... Ceremonies after a funeral, lasting ten days.

Náráyana ... ... A name of Vishnu as the Supreme.
Neem ... ... Margosa tree (Azadirachta Indica).
Nírvána ... ... Liberation. Extinction. Absorption into the Supreme Essence.
Nitya karma ... ... The Hindu daily round.
Nivédanam ... ... Offering of food to the gods.
Niyógis ... ... A Saiva sect.

Óm (see Aum).
Oupasana ... ... Sacrifice by fire.

Padma ... ... The lotus or water lily.
Pakshivésévám ... ... Malas who bury their dead in the day time.
Panchamas ... ... Non-caste Hindus. Out-castes.
Pandal ... ... Temporary booth.
Pánchángam ... ... Almanack.
Panchagavyam ... ... Mixture, consisting of the five products of the cow, given to a person about to die.
Pansupári (see Támbúlam).
Pápalokam ... ... Temporary Hell.
Paramátma ... ... The Supreme Spirit.
Párvati ... ... Name of the wife of Siva.
Parivetṛu ... ... A married brother whose elder brother is unmarried.
Parivittu ... ... Unmarried elder brother whose younger brother is married.
Pátála ... ... Hell.
Pativratam ... ... Husband worship.
Peddadinamu ... ... A certain day in the days of mourning.
Pendle aruga ... ... The marriage mound.
Perumállu ... ... Figures of gods used in funeral ceremonies.

Píta ... ... The spirit of the departed when, by virtue of certain rites, the préta or spirit is invested with an ethereal body and is admitted into the company of its ancestors.

Pitrulókam ... ... The ancestral heaven.

Pitrutarpanam ... ... Ancestral worship.

Pradakshina ... ... A ceremony at a funeral.

Prashnam ... ... Enquiry. Devination.

Pratáyam ... ... An age.

Prathánam ... ... Betrothal ceremonies.

Pratishta ... ... Ceremony on invoking the presence of the gods into anything.

Pravara ... ... The mention by a worshipper of the names of himself, tribe and family.

Práyaschittam ... ... A ceremony of expiation.

Préta ... ... Ghost, Spirit of the departed before the funeral rites are performed.

Prétáháram ... ... Food for the spirit of the departed.

Préta shila ... ... A stone which, when consecrated at a funeral, is supposed to become the personification of the departed spirit.

Puja ... ... Worship.

Pundrams ... ... Sacred marks.

Punyalókam ... ... Temporary heaven.

Pundrarikáksha ... ... The white lotus-eyed one.

Punyáhavachanam ... Purificatory rite when a house has been ceremonially defiled.

Punyam ... ... Acquired merit.

Puróhita ... ... The family priest.

Rákshasa ... ... Monster. Demon.

Ratnapariksha ... ... A book on the testing of precious stones.

Rávi	... Indian tree (Ficus religiosa).
Regni	... Indian tree (Zizephus jujuba).
Rishi	... Ancient Indian sage.
Saiva	... Pertaining to Siva.
Sámudrikam ...	... Palmistry.
Sandyárandanam ...	... Morning and midday prayer.
Sankalpam	... Mention of time and place when performing a ceremony.
Sankha	... Conch shell.
Sanyasi	... Monk. Hermit.
Sapindi	... Rite at a funeral.
Saptapadi	... Part of the marriage ceremony.
Sáshtánganamaskáram	... An obeisance in which the body touches the ground with eight of its members, hands, knees, shoulders, breast and forehead.
Satanis	... A Vaishnava sect, mendicants.
Sati	... Self-immolation by a wife on the funeral pyre of her husband.
Satram	... Public lodging place.
Shastram	... Science, Law.
Shatáyussu ...	... An exclamation meaning, "live for a hundred years."
Shiladhivásam ...	... A ceremony connected with the préla shila on the tenth day of mourning after a funeral.
Shmashánam ...	... Cemetery.
Shráddha	... Periodical ceremony for the dead.
Sikha	... The sacred tuft of hair on the head.
Simhadváram ...	... Principal entrance to a house.
Sita	... Wife of the god Ráma.
Sivarátri	... Birthnight of Siva.
Smartha	... A sect which worships Siva.
Smirti	... Traditional writings.
Somayájulu	... One who has made a yajnam sacrifice.
Srichúrnam	... Central mark of the Vaishnava sacred marks.

Sthálipákam	... A marriage rite.
Suryanadi	... The right nostril.
Sudasyam	... A meeting of the elders at a wedding.
Surya	... The sun.
Sútakam	... Mourning. Ceremonial defilement.
Sutraehchédam ...	... Cutting the marriage cord from off the neck of a widow at her degradation ceremony.
Svadesh	... Native. National.
Svaha	... Heaven.
Támbúlam	... Betel leaf and areca nut made up for chewing.
Tarpanam	... Drink offering.
Tilakam	... Red mark made by women on their forehead.
Tiryakkundam ...	... Horizontal lines drawn on the forehead by worshippers of Siva.
Tirumani	... White clay used for the sacred marks.
Tirupalliváru ...	... Malas who bury their dead at night.
Todas	... Tribe on the Nilgiri Hills.
Tothyans	... Primitive tribe in South India.
Toti	... Scavenger.
Trimúrti	... The Hindu trinity.
Tritéru	... Three-storied car, small shrine made at a Mala funeral.
Tsuttu	... Woman's toe-ring.
Tulasi	... Sacred basil tree (Ocymum sanctum).
Upanayanam ...	... Investiture of the twice-born with the sacred thread.
Urdhva pundram ...	... Perpendicular sacred marks. Marks of Vishnu.
Vaikuntha	... Heaven of Vishnu.

Vaisyas	... The merchant caste.
Vaishnava	... Worshipper of Vishnu.
Vánaprastha ...	... Anclorite.
Vasantam	... Coloured water used on festive occasions.
Vástru Shástram ...	... Code of ceremonial requirements in connection with house building.
Vástru Shástri ...	... A man learned in the Vástru Shástram.
Veda	... Hindu sacred books.
Védanta	... A school of Hindu philosophy.
Vettian	... Petty village official (Tamil).
Vibhuthi	... Burnt ashes of cowdung.
Visishtádvaita ...	... Unity with attributes, a division of Hindu philosophy.
Vitanam	... Canopy.
Vratam	... Religious observance.
Yagnam	... A kind of animal sacrifice.
Yajnópavltam ...	... Sacred thread.
Yama	... Genius of death. Judge of departed spirits.
Yanadies	... A migratory aboriginal tribe.
Yerukulas	... A Gypsy tribe.
Yogí	... Hermit.
Yuga	... Period of time. An age.
Zuttu	... Telugu word for the sacred tuft of hair.
Zuvvi	... Indian tree (Ficus infectoria).

INDEX

Opinions of the Press.

The general reader will get an excellent account of practical Hinduism from this book. The customs may differ in other parts of the country in matters of detail, but the same broad principles will remain, for they are all based on the teaching of Manu, the great Hindu law-giver, and so not only to missionaries of South India, but to those in other parts of the country, this work will be a great help.—*C.M.S. Intelligencer*, July, 1896.

From an anthropological point of view one could not wish for a more interesting and complete set of notes on Hindus, their manners, customs, and religion, than is to be found in Mr. Padfield's book. . . . The work forms a most complete text-book on the subject.—*The Guardian*, London, August 19, 1896.

The student of Foreign Missions who wishes to acquaint himself fully with Hindu daily life cannot do better than obtain the extremely interesting book which Mr. Padfield, of the C.M.S., has written.—*The Record*, August 28, 1896.

The best compliment we can pay to Mr. Padfield is to say that his book will be most valued by those who know India best. *London Daily News*, May 18, 1896.

Mr. Padfield's volume is popular in form and in price, and furnishes trustworthy information on the chief elements of Hindu life, and the perusal of it is calculated to throw a fresh and clear light on the actual work-a-day existence of the Hindu population of India.—*The Daily Chronicle*, May 16, 1896.

We can warmly recommend the volume. A perusal of it will open a European's eyes to much that he has probably never noticed in a Hindu village, and will not fail to give an interest to his daily life in this land of exile.—*Madras Mail*, March 16, 1896.

This book is quite an encyclopædia of information on the daily life of the Hindu. And we are glad to note that Mr. Padfield is a scholar, and has the scholar's instinct for inquiring into the reasons and relationships of things. This gives to his work a special value to the student of anthropology.—*The Bradford Observer*, May 28, 1896.

The position of the Hindu woman, both as wife and widow, is admirably defined by the Rev. J. E. Padfield in "The Hindu at Home."—*Lady's Pictorial*, May 20, 1896.